

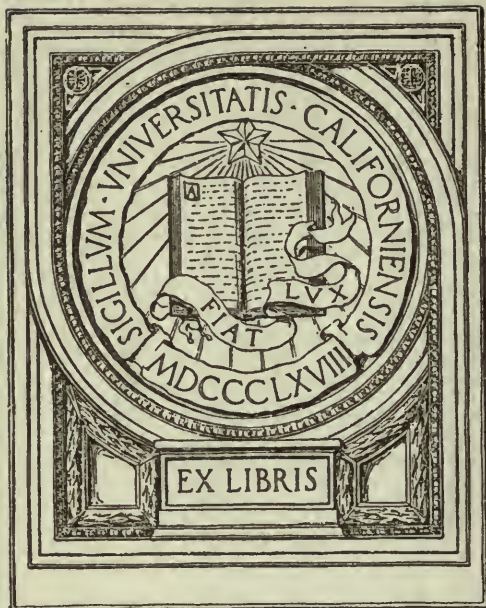
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Plays by Robert Bridges.

No. iv. Christian Captives.

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THE
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THE
CHRISTIAN CAPTIVES

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS IN A MIXED
MANNER.

BY
ROBERT BRIDGES.

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THE CHRISTIAN CAPTIVES.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING OF FEZ.

ALMEH his daughter.

SALA BEN SALA his General.

TARUDANTE Prince of Morocco.

FERDINAND } Princes of Portugal.
ENRIQUE }

ZAPEL maid to Almeh.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN CAPTIVES.

Soldiers, Guards, and Messengers.

The scene is in the garden of a castle of the King of Fez, by the sea.

ACT I.

Almeh and Zapel.

Almeh.

WHY never came we here before? To think
I have lived for eighteen years shut up in
Fez,
Hemmed by the sandy desert, and all the
while

There was the sea! To have never seen the sea!

Za. If thou hadst ever seen it, where were now
Thy joy? 'tis the first sight makes the delight.
To them that in this castle dwell, the sea—

Is as the desert was to us at Fez.

Al. Custom will dull the sense of any pleasure.
But set them down at Fez, would they not pine? ¹⁰
There's life in the air. 'Twixt yon blue roomy dome
And watery pavement the young winds charge forth
Stored with refreshment: now we taste the springs
Man's spirit should drink, the very mountain torrent
Of heaven, that were content to slake our throats'
Immortal thirst at stagnant pools. What, Zapel,
Is the limit of our stay? now I am here,
I would abide for ever.

Za.

I know as little

As thou. The king, thy sire, came here to fight
The unbelievers: when they are beaten back
We shall go home. But why he sent for thee
I cannot guess.

Al. Last night I know not, Zapel,
Whether I slept or waked,—

Za. Nor could I sleep.

Al. But as I lay and listened to the sea,
I plainly heard a waft of singing voices,
That rose and fell and died anon away,
Whiling the dark with some sweet lullaby.

Za. Why, 'twas the Christian captives that thou
heardst.

Al. Ah! prisoners in the castle: I had forgot:
'Twas told me. And they are Christians! Can it be
They sing so sweetly?

Za. Nay, I call it not sweet.
'Tis sadder than the moaning of the wind
To hear them praise their god.

Al. True, it was sad:
Unearthly it seemed. Now more than ever, Zapel,
I am glad I came; if there be Christians here,
And I may come to see them: All my life
I have heard strange things of them, and wondered
much

What they were like. I'll speak with them.

Za. Ha! ha!

Al. Why not?

Za. They lie chained in a noisome pit,
Where 'tis impossible to come.

Al. Who be they? 40

What is their fault?

Za. They are captives in the war.

Al. My father doth not use his captives so.

Za. They are unbelievers.

Al. True: yet that's no crime

But what they might impute to us. Were we

In their hands fallen, thus cut off from our homes,

'Twere cruel to be tortured for the faith.

Za. They are worthless dogs.

Al. Alas! is all my teaching

So cast away upon thy boorish soul?

Pity makes brethren of our enemies.

Za. Forgive me, lady; I spoke in haste; and
yet— 50

I would that thou couldst think as I.

Al. Indeed,

That were attainment. Vex me not, I bid thee;

But plan with me how I may see these captives:

Were 't but to have them sing to me I'd do it;

But curiosity and pity alike

Move me. If man is cruel, 'tis woman's part

To ease the suffering which she cannot hinder.

Za. How wouldst thou see them?

Al. I shall ask my father

To grant them, if it be but once a day,

To walk at liberty within the walls. 60

Za. 'Tis pity Sala is not here.

Al. Thy meaning?

Za. The general hath the keeping of the castle,

And he would grant thy way in any wish,

Howe'er preposterous.

Al. And thou sayst not ill.

Sala is approachable and kind at heart;

'Tis pity he is away. [*Trumpets heard without.*]

Za. Here comes the king,

He bade me shew thee hither in the garden,

And here will look to find thee.

Al. Go, I bid thee,

And tell him that I am here. [*Exit Zapel.*]

Now shall I know why I was sent for hither. 70

Would 'twere to take this castle for my own,

With no more retinue than might suffice

To till this garden, and to cook my food,

I'd win these Christian captives to my service

For ministers and minstrels; ay, and they

Should row me on the sea. I'd have my books

In the northern tower, where set on high my lamp,

Forestalling darkness with its seaward ray,

Sailors should look for, and on tranquil nights

Hear solemn music faintly, and believe 80

There was enchantment. Could I have my will,

So would I live. And where's the gain to be

The daughter of a king, when every wish

Nearest one's heart is of like course denied,

As to the meanest peasant . . . when one word,

One nod could grant it?

Enter King.

K. Alme! my rose of June!

Queen of my gardens, flower of all my kingdom!

Al. Honour be thine, my sire.

K. I bring thee joy.

Hast thou not wondered why I sent for thee?

Al. Why was it? I long to know.

K. [*giving*]. See for thyself.

Al. A picture!

K.

'Tis a portrait.

Al.

And of whom?

K. Dost thou not guess who this young Kaled is:

This high and dauntless brow, this stalwart arm,

Keen eye and martial poise?

Al.

If this be he,

Who made of late entreaty for my hand,

Prince Tarudante . . .

K.

A happy omen. Ay,

Look, girl, and love him, for he weds thee well

With all Morocco.

Al.

Yet I cannot love

Thy wish to banish me so far.

K.

Thy marriage

Will bring Morocco nearer, and renew 100

Our old alliance: for thy valiant lover

Comes not with gold to woo thee, but sharp steel.

His flag is black, his ceremonious train

Are twenty thousand horsemen sworn to avenge

The Prophet . . . Ceuta will be mine.

Al.

Ah, sire!

I like not love that comes with war to woo.

K.

But war that shall bring peace, whose lasting

olive

May not be sceptred in my hand, until

This fallen jewel be set back in my crown.

Thy bridal with Morocco shall wipe out 110

The old dishonour that hath vexed my reign.

Al.

And yet doth Ceuta, sire, in all thy kingdom

Rank as a little town.

K.

Thou art a woman;

How can I show thee? This anemone;

'Tis beautiful, nor canst thou say its grace

Resides in this part nor in that: but look;

I pluck a petal from it.—Thou beholdst

My kingdom without Ceuta. Wouldst thou wish

To set this back unto the perfect flower?

Al.

How could I do it?

K.

I must tell thee all. 120

Our ancestors, thou knowest, blest be their names,

Long ruled in Spain, and made that coign of the earth

The glory of all; but to the peaceful arts

Turning their genius when the sword was sheathed,

Their prudence slept: for that half-barbarous race,

Whom conquering they had spared, grew up more apt

In arms, and rising 'gainst our easy folk

O'erthrew and dispossessed them;—and, not content

To have driven us out of Spain, pursued us hither,

Where in our southern bounds we lived retired, 130

Behind the ocean as an ample shield.

'Twas in thy grandsire's time, ere thou wert born,

They did this wrong; the boastful Portuguese

Sworn with malevolence,—why should I say it?—

King Joam and his sons, all unprovoked,

For we had oaths of peace, attacked us here

With sudden treacherous assault, and seized

Ceuta, our strongest fortress thitherward.

Impregnable we deemed it, and indeed

Impregnable have found it 'gainst ourselves 140

For twenty years besieging it in vain.

Then should this shame, unbearable to us,
Prove but incitement to our foes, a foothold
For further wresting. Two months have not passed
Since that a new Armada sailed from Tagus
Against Tangiers, and both by land and sea
Besieging would have left that city too,
And added my dishonour to my father's,
Had not Ben Sala's generalship o'ermatched
Their most infernal malice. Praised be Allah!
They fell, they fled; and such as fled not lie
Dead on our sands or in our dungeons chained.

Al. Are those the captives in the castle pit?

K. Ay, but thou breakst my tale;—mark what I tell.—

The victory mine, I looked to make fair peace,
And would have given my prisoners in exchange
For Ceuta; but the prince of Portugal,
Behind those walls retired, refused the ransom;
And gathering reinforcement hath come forth
To devastate the country. 'Tis 'gainst him
That Sala marched five days ago. Meanwhile
Morocco, who was treating for thy hand,
Heard tidings of our war, and having now
An armament collected 'gainst the tribes,
Has turned it to my rescue. 'Twas for this
I sent for thee; in furtherance of thy marriage;
Hoping thereby to bind him in the terms
I have to tell thee. However Sala fare;
And hitherto no news comes from his camp,
'Twere no achievement worthy of Tarudante
To make dispersal of a broken foe:
I shall propose a greater enterprise;
I'll say—"Thou wilt not grudge to sweep the bounds
Of the fair realm, whose heir thou wouldst wed,
Make us this compact—Win me Ceuta back
And drive the idolaters across the sea,
Ere thou take home my daughter for thy queen."

Al. But doth Morocco, sire, know I am here?

K. Nay, nor myself knew, when I sent for thee,
How 'twould fall out: 'twas timed most happily.

Al. But coming not to woo, may he not find
Offence in the constraint; as I confess
I feel to lay it on him, tho' my lover?

K. Nay, nay, girl; he is in earnest; meet him
frankly;
'Tis by his love thou shalt restore my town.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. News from the army, Sire.

K. Thou lookest black:
What is it? speak.

Mess. O mighty king, 'tis ill.
Sala ben Sala's forces were attacked
At nightfall by the Christians. In the dark
Was battle waged. By morn what men remained
And all the camp were captive.

K. God forbid!
Five thousand men were there: be none escaped?

Mess. Such as in darkness fled.

K. And fledst thou thence?

Mess. The general sent me on.

K. And what of him?

Mess. The dawn discovered him, when all was
lost.

Fighting on foot upon a little hill,
Surrounded by the foe; when seeing no hope,

He made surrender to the Christian leader,
Who gave him liberty: Thus far to tell
He bade; and that he followed speedily.

K. When will he come?

Mess. Sire, tho' I used all duty,
He hath overtaken me and dismounts without.

K. Go, wait upon him. [*Exit Messenger.*]

Accursed be the seed
Of these idolaters. Five thousand men,
The best in Fez: the right arm of my power
Lost in one night. Five thousand men were there.
Ah! by God's holiest names!

Al. Thank heaven, dear father,
The best is saved, if Sala be escaped.

K. True, girl; and from the ill there's good to
come.

Their victory will lead these devils on.
Ay; they will come. They know not of Morocco;
They run into a trap.

Al. Will you make peace?

K. God bids us smite these hogs: I would that
hell
Were deeper to receive them.

Enter Sala.

Sala ben Sala, peace be with thee!

Sa. The peace of heaven be thine, my king!

K. Thou comest
Most swiftly from the battle.

Sa. With less haste
Than needed; but fatigue and wounds delayed me.
What see I? The princess here! Alas, alas!
O my disaster!

Al. Now I thank God, Sala,
That thou art alive.

Sa. To such shame is not good.
Sire, while there's time, escape; and leave me here
To hold the castle for thee as I may.

K. Have thou no fear, Sala. My daughter, go:
Leave us alone; or better sit thou there;
And hear what Sala tells: and, Sala, thou
Begin the tale for which thy messenger
Hath well prepared my ear. Here is thy seat.

Sa. Hear then, my liege, what happened, as I
tell.

(Aside.) Yet how to tell my shame in Almeh's ears?—
'Tis the fifth day since thou didst send me forth
Against the Christian bands, which as we learned
Harassed the plains of Ceuta.—Thither I marched
Four thousand strong, besides our cavalry
And bowmen: Here and there some small encounters
Drove back the foe within the gates, and then
I made return, establishing the country
And strengthening the garrisons, nor heard
That any greater force had come afield:
When yesterday at noon our scouts espied
The flash and dust of marching in the west,
Among the hills: thither we turned our face,
And had no fear but for the foe's escape,
Nor guessed how much the lurking enemy
Outmatched our weakened numbers. What surprise,—
I blame myself,—then, when our scouts came in
At sunset with the tidings that the foe,
Whom we thought flying from us, held the pass
Against our coming. Straight I chose a spot
Such as we might defend, and there encamped,

And would have stayed till morn, when suddenly
The stragglers on our rear were driven in
By horse that fell upon our flank ; and soon
I heard our front engaged. The moon to them,
—That was our peril,—the accursed yellow moon
Exposed our camp, while in the shadowy glens
The night hid their attack ; our disposition
Was else not ill. Taking sufficient force,
I turned to clear the rear ; but in the dark
Met with great numbers. How we fought God
knows,

Surrounded on all hands. If any fled
I cannot guess : but battling there till dawn,
I saw at daybreak there were left with me
But hundreds against thousands. Then to save
The needless slaughter, I gave up my sword
Unto the Christian leader, Ferdinand
Of Portugal ; nor ever had here returned
To speak of the disaster, but that prince,
Clement as valiant, asked me courteously
My name, and hearing it returned my sword,
And bidding me choose out from all his suite
What horse best pleased me,—for my own was
killed ;—

He raised his helm, and said,
“ Go free, brave Sala ; ride and tell thy king
We follow thee to rescue from his hands
The prisoners he withholds : ” That is my tale.
Allah is great, and what he doth to-day
To-morrow he may undo.

K. This courteous Christian
Is but a fool : for had he kept thee fast,
He might have had his men in thy exchange.

Sa. No less now must thou grant them.

K. No, by God.
Hark, Sala : these few days thou hast been away
Have brought me from the east four times the force
Which thou ill-fatedly hast lost. Morocco
Lies camped a short league hence, and in his tents
Are twenty thousand men.

Sa. Morocco is here ?

K. Said I not well ? Is he not one to meet
These Christians ? Let them come. How many be
they ?

Sa. Eight, maybe, or nine thousand. Where's
Morocco ?

K. At Alcabar. When look they to be here ?

Sa. They have no thought we can oppose their
host,
And will not hasten.

K. We will be ready for them.
Prepare to leave by noon : thou must collect
What men thou canst. I will go write my summons
To Tarudante. Stay : I have not enquired
What are thy wounds.

Sa. Nothing that should forbid
Immediate service : food, an hour of rest
Will make me fit.

K. In three hours be thou ready.

Al. Go thou within, Sala ; and rest thee now.
Or wilt thou first take food ?

Sa. There's time enough.
Bid me not hence, my rest and food are here.
How cam'st thou hither ?

Al. The king sent for me.

Sa. And why ? Thee in the camp ! O-beauteous
Almei,

Dost thou think vilely of me, that the Christian
Surprised and overcame me ? If I had known
That thou wast here . . .

Al. Stay, Sala : thou wilt hurt
Thy soldiery. I doubt not Ferdinand
Is a most worthy foe : I rather fear
He hath a quality unconquerable.

Sa. Ha ! then I am scorned.

Al. I mean he is generous :
He set thee free. Couldst thou not match that deed ?

Sa. As friend or foe I would outmatch him bravely.
Nay, but to see him in his angel-fairness
Provoked my emulation, and I vowed
Some day to kill his horse, and take his sword,
And cry him quit.

Al. Still thou art for war : 'twere better
Pay thy debt fairly with the price he asks,
These miserable captives.

Sa. I would have done so.
But thou didst hear the king refuse. He is sworn
To grant no terms till Ceuta be restored.
Besides our prophet's law forbids this traffic,
To exchange our captives with the infidels.

Al. But hast thou then thyself, Sala, no power
To do them any kindness ; or for me . . .
Wilt thou not grant them so much liberty
As to walk in the garden once a day ?
If I might speak with them I might do somewhat
To pay the debt we owe their general ;
And to speak truth, for my own sake I ask it.

Sa. How for thy sake ?

Al. I wish to hear them sing.
Sa. How could that please ? Who told thee that
they sing ?

Al. 'Twas last night, Sala, as I lay long awake
Dreamily hearkening to the ocean murmur,
Softer than silence, on mine ears there stole
A solemn sound of wailful harmony :
So beautiful it was that first I thought
This castle was enchanted, as I have read
In eastern fables ; or else that 'twas the song
Of people of this land, who make the sea
Their secret god, and at midnight arise
To kneel upon the shore, and his divinity
Beseech with shrilling prayer : or then it seemed
A liquid-voiced choir of spirits that swam
Upon the ocean surface, harp in hand,
Swelling their hymns with his deep undersong.
That was the Christian captives.

Sa. 'Twas the night
Softened their wails to sweetness : as the space
'Twixt hell and heaven makes the cries of the damned
Music to the angels.

Al. Sala, 'tis not the king,
'Tis thou art cruel ; thou hast a heart of hate.
Sa. O' nay, a heart of love. I would not count
Dishonour, Almei ; I would be at peace.
With shame and infidels and all the world,
Wouldst thou be mine.

Al. Now, if my father heard thee !
Thou dar'st much, thinking that I cannot tell :
Which if I have never done, 'tis that I am loth
To lose so old a friend ; 'tis pain to see
That as I am grown from childhood, thou art grown

From friendship, and for loving me too much
Must love me now no more.

Sa. Ah! what is that? 360
A portrait in thy hand? Nay show it me.
Why dost thou blush? Who is the happy one
Thou carriest thus to gaze on?

Al. Look and see.
Sa. 'Tis Taradante. O thou faithless Almeh,
To speak of friendship who hast never told me.
Thou hast a lover. Now I see the cause.
Why thou art here. This boy.—'Tis a smooth cheek,
A pretty picture. Ah! wert thou not shamed
To slight me for a sprinkling of grey hair
About my temples, thou wouldst never thus 370
Have hid thy passion.

Al. Tho' thou hast stolen from me
A privilege to love me, I deny thee
The liberty to judge me and reprove.

Sa. Ever, when thou hast bidden my love be dumb,
My tongue hath been obedient: but my anger,
My jealousy will speak. How gallest thou this?

Al. Question not so, or I will never tell.

Sa. Have pity, Almeh, and tell me.
Al. Then 'tis thus.

My father gave it me this very hour,
As herald of the prince whom it portrays. 380
He comes on double mission, first to fight
Against our foes.

Sa. Hast thou consented, Almeh?
Al. If 'tis my father's will, and if the prince
Be earnest in his courtship.

Sa. Ah! thou dost wish it.
Al. My wish can count but little; but my wish
Is not for this nor any other marriage.

Sa. Thou hast yielded to the thought. Would I
had died

On Ferdinand's sword; or that that prince had ne'er
Heard my ill-fated name, Sala, far happier
Chained in a Spanish galley, than set free 390
To find thee in a rival's arms.

Al. O shame!

How have I yielded?

Sa. Thou hast taken in hand
This cursed portrait: held it.

Al. Nay, I pray.

Sa. Gazed on it, fondled it: a pictured boy!
Thy champion.

Al. I bid thee think . . .
Sa. A painted image!

Al. And what, pray, wouldst thou have had me do?
Sa. What do?

Never to have taken it: refused it: scorned it:
Cast it beneath thy feet: trodden it to atoms.

Al. Thou wrongst me, Sala, now: thou art
overcome.

With fasting and much fighting.

Sa. O, I am wronged
To have the temper of my passion judged

As hunger or fatigue. Here is thy picture,

Thy lover: Take it back. Farewell. I go,

But not to eat or rest. Almeh, farewell:

I would have died for thee.

Al. Nay, go not thus

Unkindly.

Sa. 'Tis farewell: but not unkindness,
Lest thou shouldst say my last word was unkindness,

I will go seek the king, and shall persuade him
Ere I depart to grant the Christian captives

The little liberty which thou hast asked: 410

Then to the war; wherein I pray that heaven

Hath laid my death: if anywhere on earth

Within my reach, I'll find it. O farewell.

The Angels guard thee. [Going.]

Al. I bid thee go not thus.

ACT II.

*Almeh and Zapel listening. The Christian
Captives are singing at back among the trees.*

CHORUS.

*Jesu dulcis memoria,
Dans vera cordis gaudia;
Set super mel et omnia,
Ejus dulcis presentia.*

[Music by
Allegri.]

Za. How strange a moan!

Al. Hush, Zapel, hush: go in.
Leave me. Stay, I will go with thee so far 420
That they shall think we both are gone. This way.

*Almeh and Zapel go aside. Exit Zapel. Almeh
enters arbour.*

CHORUS.

*Jesu decus angelicum,
In aure dulces canticum,
In ore mel mirificum,
In corde nectar calicum.*

*Nil canitur suavius,
Nil auditur jucundius,
Nil cognatur dulcius,
Quam Jesu Dei filius.*

[Music by
Anerio.]

Al. (aside). They sing of Jesus, whom they make
their god. 430

I understand no more: only their praise

Is sweeter than whatever I have heard

In mosque or sacred temple, or the chant

Of holy pilgrims, that beguile the road.

I'll learn what they will tell me of their hymns;

And whence they have this music. Ah, they see me.

Sir, pray withdraw not thus. Step on this terrace;

Hence may you view the sea. Your helpless lot

I pity; and if indeed I have any power

To ease the pains of your captivity, 440

'Tis but a debt I owe you for the pleasure

Your music wakes within me. Come this way.

Cho. Lady, we thank thy grace and gentleness:

But yonder grove contents us, in the shade

Where, if we walked retired, we shall not strain

The privilege we prize.

Al. Why, since I ask,

Take courage, come. There's none will see but I.

Ch. We dare not disobey.

Al. Come forward, hither.

I bid you all for pleasure as my friends.

And ye could much delight me, would ye tell 450

What theme ye lately sang: for though sweet music

Needs no interpretation, yet the thought

That gives occasion to the smile of love

Is dear itself; and I am like a lover

Wondering what fancy 'twas, that bred a strain

Of such deliberate joy.

Ch. Forbid the thought,
Lady: the sea, with whose expansive sight
Thou thoughtest to rejoice our prisoned eyes,
Doth not dis sever us from our lost homes
With wider deeper gulf, than that which lies
Betwixt our souls and thine. Thou mayst not know.

Al. I know ye sang of Jesus.

Ch. Knowst thou that,
And askest more?

Al. Ay tell me.

Ch. Praised be God!

Al. I envy you your skill. I prithee tell me
What was't ye sang.

Ch. The praise of Jesus' name.
'Tis what all nature sings; the whole creation
Ceaseth not, nor is silent in his praise:
Neither God's angels, nor the spirit of man
With speech directed into him, nor things
Animate nor inanimate, by the mouth
Of them that meditate thereon: which praise
Music hath perfected, and that we use
Less for his glory, than that thence our souls
May from their weariness arise to him,
In whom is our refreshment and true strength.

Al. I pray you sing again.

Ch. If thou wilt hear,
We will sing more.

*O Jesu mi dulcissime,
O spes spirantis anima,
Te querunt pie lacryma,
Et clamor mentis intima.* [Music by Alerio.]

Al. Music ne'er found a better speech. I pray
Could I sing with you? Were it long to learn?

Ch. Thou hast the art's first secret, loving it.

Al. Many have that; and I can sing alone,
But ne'er have learned your many-voiced skill.

Ch. That is the maker's art: the song being made,
'Tis to sing strictly, and to teach thy phrase
Confident rivalry, as if thou knewest
Thy passion was the deepest, and could blend
The wandering strains in closer harmony.

Al. Make me your pupil. How should I begin?

[Drums and trumpets without.]

Ch. The king!

Al. Break off, my father is returned,
Lest he should enter here, haste to your bounds,
And be not seen. There will I visit you,
Or bid you forth again.

Ch. We thank thee, lady.

Enter Zapel, hurriedly.

Za. My lady, hast thou heard?

Al. What is it, Zapel?

Za. The infidels are routed, and the king
Is coming from the field with Tarudante
Prince of Morocco, and between them ride
The two chief captains of the unbelievers,
Princes of Portugal; be Allah praised.

Ch. Alas! O woe, alas! Forgive us, lady,
That thus we weep before thee.

Al. Nay, be sure

I pity you myself, and could not blame
Your natural grief. But 'tis the vice of war,
That whatsoever side hath victory;

The misery is alike, nor in the advantage
Is aught to compensate the evil done.
May God give strength to right!

Ch. Amen, Amen! 510
(*To Z.*) Pray, lady, didst thou say prince Ferdinand
Was taken?

Za. Ye may question him himself;
Talk not with me.

Al. I beg you, friends, be gone:
Ye must not stay.

Ch. We will depart and mourn
Within our sultry pit. [Exit.]

Al. My father comes?

Za. He is at the gate.

Al. What'er thou'st seen or heard
Between me and these hapless prisoners,
See that thou tell not.

Za. 'Tis an accursed thing.

Al. 'Tis not for thee to judge; but do my bidding.

Za. And thou shouldst trust me better.

Al. I do trust thee,
And therefore bid thee thus.

Za. And I obey.

Al. Is not this Ferdinand they spoke of, he
Whose chivalry we thank for Sala's life?

Za. That's he.

Al. Then I shall see this red-crossed knight,
The noblest of them all! The general said
He was of angel fairness; then he is cousin
To the emperor of England.

Za. Thou shalt see
A Moor worth fifty Christian Portuguese,
His conqueror, thy lover Tarudante,
Heir of Morocco.

Al. Silence: see they come. 530.

*Enter King with Tarudante and Ferdinand,
followed by Enrique and Sala.*

Za. (to A.). There's Tarudante.

Al. (aside). There is Ferdinand.

King. (to T.). Now, noble prince, thou hast over-
come our foes;

This is thy second battlefield, whereon
Thy love may make like conquest as thy sword.
Pitch here thy tent, and make thy war in peace.
Forget the reeking and gore-dappled plain
Mid scent of pinks and jasmín, and the flush
Of hot carnation and full-blooded rose.

See, I will lead thee to the virgin fortress
That thou mayst kneel to take. Come hither, Almeh:
Here is the prince thy lover. Tarudante,
Behold her whom thou askest for thy queen.

Al. (aside, coming forward). Now of these two
might I but choose.

K. Come, daughter,
Put off this modesty.

Al. (aside). My eyes refuse him.

Tar. Lady, forgive my boldness in desiring.
What I had never seen. Thy beauty's fame,
The high nobility of this alliance

Led me so far; but now I have seen, I see
I must be bolder, or renounce my boldness,
That begged a grace so far beyond my thought. 550

Al. I should be much ashamed, prince, if thy suit,
Which seeks the honour of my father's house,
Stumbled at my unworthiness: but praise

Of pictures,—and mere beauty is no more,—
Exalteth but the maker. May the days

Thou spendest here with us be rich in peace. [*Going.*

Fer. (*aside to En.*). By heaven, the devil is gentle
to these Moors :

They match our folk in beauty as in arms.

K. Stay, Alneh, stay ! [*Alneh turns.*

En. (*to F.*). These be the Spanish Arab ; such a
race

Sprang never from the sooty loins of Ham. 560

Al. (*to K.*). Excuse me, sire, I pray.

[*Exit with Zapel.*

Fer. (*to En.*). Devil or angel or Arab, she hath
stolen my soul.

Tar. Such perfect grace, such speech and modesty
Outbid my fancy ; I would fight thy battles

For twenty years to call thy treasure mine.

K. I say she is thine, and she is my only child.

Sa. (*aside*). And I must hear this spoken, and
hold my peace.

K. So now, prince Ferdinand ; the chance of war
In making thee my captive gives me power

To dictate terms which shall content us all. 570

Thou shalt go free—that is my gift to thee :—

But in return for that,—my profit this,—

I will have Ceuta ; 'tis an ancient town,

By name and people African, and held

By followers of the prophet from the day

When truth unconquerable like a flood

Of sunlight dawned on the benighted west.

Thy father robbed it from us, and I ask

That thou restore it. 'Tis thy ransom, prince.

The king, thy brother, will not grudge to yield 580

To me, a king, part of mine own, which he

Wrongfully came by ; if so, he may buy thee,

His natural own, his flesh and blood, whom I

Conquered in self-defence. I'll keep thee here,

Till I may know his will : and to learn that

I'll send thy brother home, the prince Enrique,

To bear him, with what speed he may, the tidings

Of thy defeat, captivity, and the terms

Of thy release. Look not so sorrowful.

Fer. I thank your majesty for just rebuke 590

Of my discourtesy. By selfish gloom

I mar my entertainment, and belie

My gratitude for kindness to me shewn

Since I was prisoner.

K. No thanks for that :

Nor seek I to impose a countenance

Upon thy proper feeling. Yet if now

Thou'rt sad, I spake in vain.

Fer. 'Tis for my fault

And ill-success I am sad : To have lost my troops

Or led them to the fate of those whose rescue

They thought to be : not for my private case, 600

Wherein your terms of ransom but make hope

Impossible : the cession of a town

Under the king's protection, and therewith

The peril of so many Christian souls,

The desecration of our hallowed churches,

The abandonment of loyal loving subjects

Unto the heavy yoke which Islam lays

On true believers. No king would give ear

To such a compact : and your claim falls short ;

For what you have urged doth not lay bare the root.

Ceuta is African, but not for that.

Mahommedan : this thirsty continent

Had drunk Christ's truth for full four hundred years

Before your prophet's birth ; and now we fight

To win back from Mahommet what he took

By force from Christ.

K. What matters it to me

What happened in the days of ignorance ?

'Tis written in our book, that the whole world

Shall feel our sword.

Fer. 'Tis writ in ours, that they

Who take the sword, shall perish with the sword. 620

K. Surely 'twas truly spoken of yourselves.

Yet will I make no change, but my demand

Shall urge upon the king your brother ; he

Will thank me for it.

Sa. Now, most gracious master,

Let me befriend our foe. 'Tis four days since

I was his prisoner, and he set me free.

This claim the prince most generously puts by ;

Let us not pass it over : let him too

Go find another army : we meanwhile

Have ample force to march against the town. 630

K. And why should blood be spent where ink

will serve ?

'Twere thankless answer to our good ally

To put fresh pains upon him, and not use

His full sufficient victory.

Tar. My liege,

I'll serve thee as a son, and to that title

Would prove my fitness.

Sa. (*aside*). By thine absence prove it.

K. And if thou, son, wouldst dally now with war,

Rather than grasp the hours of peace and love,

What shall I think ?

Tar. That threat must stay me here.

K. Ay, stay ; and I will solve thy scruple thus,

Good Sala. By the laws of chivalry

Thou wouldst do to thy foe as he to thee :

But Ferdinand is not thy prisoner,

Nor can be spared : his brother, prince Enrique,

Whom thou didst truly capture,—tho' my purpose

Was to require his promise to return,—

Him will I give his freedom for thy sake :

If he return he shall not be detained.

En. I thank your majesty : but for my part 650

I am but a traveller, that took occasion

Of this adventure to inspect your land.

I pray make me the hostage ; I am content

With any treatment, might I come to see

Your city of Fez, and from your southward folk

Learn their opinion of the Libyan coast,

Which some aver is circled by one sea

From where we stand to Suez.

K. And so it were,

I care no more than doth a caterpillar :

What could that serve ? If thou'rt a man of peace,

The fitter then for our ambassador. 660

En. 'Tis not for me to choose, and you may trust
me

To urge the king to treat upon your terms.

I carry them most gladly.

Fer. (*to K.*). Now, I pray,

Do as my brother begs : let him be hostage,

And make me messenger : I will return.

K. Nay, nay. I doubt thee not : but 'tis my will

Thee to keep, not thy brother.

Fer. Then, my Enríque,
I make appeal to thee. Urge not these terms
On Edward: tell him rather I am myself,
And could not live ashamed.

K. I swear thou wrongst me,
And temptest me to use thee ill. No more.
Begone, Enríque; I shall look to thee
For amicable settlement. Go therefore,
And tell thy king I hold your brother here
Till he surrender Ceuta. As for thee,
Prince Ferdinand; thy word shall be thy chain:
Give me but that, and thou shalt have the freedom
Of all this castle.

Fer. I give 't your majesty.
K. 'Tis well: so all are suited. And thou,
Enríque,
Make thy best speed.

En. I go, your majesty. 680
Fer. (to *E.*). Thou know'st my mind.—
En. (to *F.*). In any case I will deliver thee.
K. No words. Begone, I pray.
En. So fare you well. [*Exit.*
K. (to *T.*). And now, Morocco, come within: I'll
show thee

Whatever preparation in thine honour
Is ordered; hoping it may so content thee,
That thou wilt reconsider of thy threat
To leave us with the moon.

Tar. What here I have seen,
Might I not take it with me when I go,
Would hold me fast until the day of doom. 690

Sa. (aside). And may the day of doom come ere
thou take it! [*Exeunt K. and T.*
(to *F.*) Most generous prince, forgive me.

Fer. I thank thee, Sala.
Sa. I pressed the king so far as I may dare.

He hath a temper to resent advice;
Which urged, will rather drive him from the matter
It looks to favour, than assist him towards it.
I must find other paths for my goodwill.
Deem me thy servant: and o'erlook the wrong
I seem to have done thee, being again constrained
To fight against thee.

Fer. Say no more, my friend. 700
We serve our kings. Thou didst surprise our people
By numbers, merely numbers. I prithee tell me
The name of your princess.

Sa. Almea.
Fer. Betrothed.

Already to the prince my conqueror?

Sa. The thing is new. Thou know'st as much
as I.

Fer. The prince is fortunate.

Sa. So is the king
In his alliance.

Fer. Is the marriage then
Between the kingdoms rather than the parties?

Sa. If 'twas your war that hath determined it.

Fer. It were a strained ungente consequence, 710
That I should sail from Portugal to force
A lover on this lady's inclination.

Sa. I were like grieved.

Fer. Her beauty far exceeds
All that I thought to find. In my own country
Our court holds not her equal.

Sa. I believe it.

Fer. And if her mind be as her speech, en-
dowed.

Sa. Thou owest her so much praise for kindnesses
Done to your prisoned countrymen.

Fer. Ah, Sala,
Where be these captives kept? if thou wouldst help
me,

I pray thee bring me in time where I may see them.
I must speak with them.

Sa. That is easy, prince.
Behind these garden grounds is a deep pit,
Used as a quarry once; steep hanging sides
Of rock it hath, that hewn away below
Are inaccessible to any foot

Save the soft lizard, that hath made his home
Among the clefts with scorpions and snakes,
And on the scorching ledges basks all day.

'Tis there these Christians lie. One way there is 730
Climbing by solid steps of native stone,
That comes up to the ground. Between those rocks
Thou seest the iron gate, and by the gate
The sentinel that keeps it. I would guide thee

To see thy countrymen; but there's no need
To make the hard descent; for once a day,
At prayer and pity of our good princess,
'Tis granted them to come and walk above
In shadow of yon balmy cypress grove,
That skirts the northern brink: and but for this,
Their sole refreshment, all were like to have died 740
Of woe, and scant food, and the daily stroke
Shelterless of the hot meridian sun.

Fer. Alas!

What fault of theirs deserved such punishment?

Sa. That they refused confession of the prophet.

Fer. To acknowledge him were to renounce their
faith.

That is no wrong.

Sa. Whether it be wrong or no,
'Tis not my will they undergo these pains.

Fer. I pray thee lead me to them, if thou mayst.

Sa. Nay, bide thou here, I will throw back the gate,
And bid them forth: and for thy less constraint 750
Will then depart. [*Goes to back, and exit.*

Fer. Such courtesy and cruelty in one
I never thought to have met, nor found on earth
So fair a prison, with an angel in it,
And no hope of deliverance. Now I see
Nature hath vainly lavished on these Moors
Bravery and beauty and all gifts of pride;
And left them barbarous for lack of thee;
Sweet Pity, of human sorrow born: 'tis thou
Dost raise man 'bove the brutes: 'tis thou dost make
His heart so singular, that he alone,
Himself commiserating, against heaven
Pushes complaint, and finds within his heart
Room for all creatures, that like him are born
To suffer and perish.

*Enter Captives from gate; they run to Ferdinand as
they see him.*

CHOR. Hail, mighty Ferdinand!—

Hail, generous prince!—Behold!

Thy countrymen enslaved.—

What hope? what hope? O say—

Arm of our fatherland,

What mercy may be told?— 770

Com'st thou to set us free?—

Are we already saved?—

Or is it true, the boast

We hear, the triumph-song?—

And art thou too as we,—

(O miserable day)—

Faln into the enemy's hand?—

And com'st thou thus alone?

Thine army slain and lost,—

The cause of Christ o'erthrown.—

What hope? what hope? O say.—

Fer. My friends, the worst is true. Trust still in God.

Ch. Alas! have all our prayers been made in vain?

Fer. Despair not yet.

Ch. What hope then dost thou bring?

Fer. I bring you courage, friends. I come to share Your prison; since I cannot set you free.

Ch. Alas! thou too art captive. All is lost.—

But if thou share our prison, shall we share

Thy ransom also, when thou goest free?

Fer. I have no ransom, friends, that ye could share.

Ch. No ransom!

Fer. Nay, no ransom:

Ch. Not for thee?

Fer. But such a ransom as cannot be paid.

Ch. So great?

Fer. Ay, even so great, that ye yourselves Would not consent to share.

Ch. Tell us the sum.

Fer. 'Tis to surrender Ceuta to the Moor.

Now are ye silent.

Ch. We are flesh and blood.

Fer. Say ye?

Ch. The stones of Ceuta cannot bleed, The walls of Ceuta would not pine as we.

Fer. Then take them for example: be as they: Lament not, pine not.

Ch. Rank we now as stones?

Fer. Stones, but not Ceuta's stones; they if they bleed

Would spout heroic blood: royally therewith Were they baptised, ere they might wear the cross:

I was a babe then: but the nurse that rocked

My cradle sang it: How the youthful prince,

Edward my brother, led the assault and fought

With hundreds hand to hand: how in the ships,

That watched the issue, the old king himself

Could no more be restrained, but forth descending,

For envy of the fight, with aged hands

Clambered upon the walls, and by his son

Dealt wary strokes of death: till o'er the heaps

Of his own slain, out of his robber nest

Sala ben Sala fled.

Ch. Long live the king!

Fer. Since that day hath the fame ceased? Hath not Ceuta

Been as Christ's tourney, where the nations

Have clapped their hands to see a few brave knights

Hold Africa at bay, and in the field

Conquer whole armies of the unbelievers?

Ch. Praised be God!

Fer. I made an oath to match

My brother's praise.

Ch. Alas! what fate withheld

God's favour from our arms?—We who set out

To do him honour, and to plant the cross

On Tangiers', as it stands on Ceuta's walls?—

The foe lay watching for us, like a lion

Descended from the mountains.

Fer. On that day

I led your battle; and when ye were taken,

I fled but to retrieve the day. I found

A second army; I sought out the foe,

And overcame him: and the furious Sala,

Faln in my hands, I feared not to set free

As herald of my triumph. I was here: I had come

Even to this castle, when behold, swarming

Innumerable from the hills around,

The horsemen of Morocco!

Ch. What of the army?

Fer. Led off in captive gangs to serve the Moor.

Ch. Alas for us and them. Thou canst not save.

We are all enslaved, all undone.

Fer. Be so,

Tamed wills, caged brutes, the off-scourings of fortune,

Mere counters of disaster! I will not yield.

Ch. Yield, prince, for us, who left our homes so far

To serve under thy banner; whom thine arm

Hath led to slavery—O prince, set them free,

Whom thou hast bound.—Restore us. Pay the price.

Fer. Can ye forget?

Ch. Nay, we remember well

Estramadura, we remember Tagus,

The banks of Guadiana, and our homes

Among the vineyards; Ezla we remember,

Obidos and Alenquer, where the trees

Shadow the village steps, and on the slopes:

Our gardens bloom: where cold Montego laves

The fertile valleys 'mong the hills of Beira:

Our country we remember; and the voices

Of wives and children, by whose tears we pray,

Despise us not. See on our knees we bow,

And by God's love pray thee deliver us.

[*They all kneel to Ferdinand.*]

Fer. Ah, wretched rebels! hath a little hardship

Melted the metal from you? I see ye are dross

Quite to the bottom. These hands that ye raise

Should have smote down the foe. Being as ye are,

How took ye upon you to defend the cross?

Doth not the shame of capture and defeat

Suffice, but ye must kneel to beg the addition

Of treason and betrayal, to deliver

Your worthless bodies from the pains that ye

Have thousandfold deserved? My brethren are ye?

Nay I'll not look upon you. [*Turns away.*]

Enter Almel and Zapel.

Al. Lo, what is this?

Ch. O gracious kind princess,

Plead for us now.

Al. What would ye?

Fer. Noble lady, ⁸⁷⁰

I have a title to thy heart's compassion:

Greater than these my countrymen, whose wives

Have moved thy spirit, and by that kindness in thee,

As by that beauty,—may I use the name

Of what I only worship,—I beseech thee

Hear them not speak, lest thou misjudge me much.

Al. Rise, friends: ere I can help you I must know

What boon ye sue for.

Fer. Not so : lest thou add
To theirs thy prayer, too strong to be denied.
Al. What fear'st thou that my voice might win for
them ? 889

Fer. Ask not of them nor me.
Al. Thou must dissuade
My pity, or meet it where 'tis first engaged.

Fer. Then hear the truth from me. They vainly
beg
Their liberty.

Al. From thee ?
Fer. Ay, lady.
Al. How !

For this I too was lately on my knees ;
But that was to the king. What power hast thou
To grant this ; or, being able, why deniest ?

Fer. They think at least that they would share my
freedom,

If I went forth : wherefore they urge me do
For them the thing I will not for myself. 890

Al. And what is that ?
Fer. Thy father hath appointed.
The town of Ceuta for my ransom, lady.

Al. And that lies then within thy power to grant ?

Fer. So far as 'tis within the power of him
Who scorns base actions to commit the basest.

Al. My sire, prince, hath a right and titled claim.

Fer. Christ hath erased all titles with his cross ;
And by that sign reclaims the world he made.

Al. I know, prince, thou art generous ; for thou
gavest

Life to thine enemy : and for that gift
I am thy friend. 'Tis for thyself I plead.

The king hath nothing nearer to his heart
Than this possession : 'tis thy life's condition.

Yield where thou must.

Fer. I hold my life as nought.
Al. Then, prince, tho' not for these, nor for thyself

Thou wilt be bent, nor to my sire wilt yield ;
Yet for the sake of holy peace submit ;

For pity of all our people and thine own,
Whom pride will slay : think of the myriad wounds
Softness may staunch ; and how kings have no honour
Above the keeping of their folk in peace.

Fer. Is't in thy creed man shall buy peace of heaven
By selling honour ? O nay. Let the king
But take my life, and count my blood enough
To be one slave's redemption ; there were then
No cause to kneel. Yea, wouldst thou show me
kindness,

Make this thy prayer. Go back unto thy sire,
And sue that he will graciously, as the exchange
For these men's freedom, kill me, or in their pit
Bury me alive.

Al. Alas, alas ! 920

Fer. If now my words in pleading for myself
Have hurt thee, lady, forgive them : nay, weep not.
Until I saw thy pity for my sake,
I had no woe to bear.

Al. And woe it is
To see such suffering wrought by man on man,
And seek to heal it with a woman's words.

Fer. Lady, I need not pity : there's no fortune
I have not heart for.

Al. Now I see these men
Have gentler hearts than thou : they gave me comfort

Receiving my compassion ; thou'rt too proud. 930

Fer. For I was shamed seeing a woman weep
Vainly for what I suffer without tears.

Al. I too am bred to shows.—Prince : I was sent
To fetch thee to the house. Attend the summons.
My father sits to dinner, and enquires
Wherefore thou tarriest. Of thy courtesy
Play our good guest with freedom ; for the king
Will use no more constraint, than as thy health
And princely state require.

Fer. I will obey thee.

Al. And not my father ?

Fer. Him, lady, perforce ; 940
But thee most cheerfully. To thee no less
Am I a captive.

[*Exeunt Almeh and Ferdinand and Zapel.*

CHORUS. (*The leader (1) speaks, answered by others.*)
Now see we hope, friends : God hath sent
His best and nearest messenger
For our deliverance.—

Chor. Who is he ?—

(1). What, hast thou eyes, and couldst not see ?—

Chor. If by thy hasty boast is meant

The sudden love upsprung
Between Christ's champion and the heathen maid,
'Tis withered on thy tongue.— 950

(1). Heathen how call'st thou her,
Our pitying angel who hath been,
And from our mouth the word of truth received ?—

Chor. Hath she believed ?—

(1). How shall not love persuade,
Now fallen to water God's own seed,
And in such soil ?—

Chor. If she confess,
'Twill but the more our tyrant's anger feed
With tenfold torture to oppress,
Or end us all at a stroke.—

(1). And so might be. 960

But hark ye what I whisper. Mark. Ye see
How in this garden one permitted hour
Each day we wander free . . .

Chor. Ay, ay—an hour a day—what should this
mean ?—

(1). By their good help, secretly armed ; I say . . .

Chor. What sayst thou ? Armed !—go on.—

(1). How easy 'twere to find

Occasion . . .

Chor. When the foe is gone to fight
Thou meanest ?—

(1). Ay, thou'rt right

Chor. And so to overpower 970
The few men left behind.—

(1). See ye—

Chor. Ay, ay. Well done !

Convert our high-walled prison to a fortress strong—
To Ceuta horse a courier—or all at night
Make our escape by flight.—

Each choosing a swift steed.—
Better await until they send

A rescue.—Nay, how long

Could we sustain the fight ?

(1). Now tell me, was I wrong 980

Speaking of hope ?

Chor. Nay, nay.

We make thee leader.—Show the way
To bring this soon about.

(1.) Mark me. I say
This is no council-chamber, and I fear,
Unless we now make end,
Joy will exalt our voices to betray
Our hope, ere 'tis well founded. Let us return
Submissively to our pit, and as we go
Sing a strain full of woe,
That, reaching to the princess' ear,
May work upon her, that she yearn
To set us free. With step and voice I lead.
Follow.

Chor. We give thee heed.—

[*Going, singing as they go.*]

ACT III.

Almeh.

O delicate air, inviting
The birth of the sun, to fire
The heavy glooms of the sea with silver laughter :
Ye sleepy flowers, that tire
In melting dreams of the day,
To splendour disregarding, with sloth awaking ;
Rejoice, rejoice, alway ;
But why are ye taking
My soul to follow you after,
To awake with you, and be joyful in your delighting ?
Ay me !

Enter Zapel from the garden, with a basket of flowers.

Za. Here are thy lilies.

Al. 'Tis enough of these ;
I thank thee, Zapel. Now there grows a flower
Wild 'neath the castle walls, a yellow rose
It seems, of stubborn habit, branching low ;
When walking on the ramparts I have seen it,
And wondered whence it drew its sustenance,
In scattered tufts upon the waste sea sands,
Go to the gate, and say I sent thee forth ;
And pluck me blooms, and such a shoot of it
As I may set at home : if it should thrive,
It shall be proud I ever looked upon it.
Why dost thou laugh ? Didst thou not hearken, girl ?

Za. I heard thee well : Go forth, Zapel, thou
shidst ;

Go where thou wilt, so thou return not soon.
Now is the hour prince Ferdinand should come ;
Lovers would be alone.

Al. Be sure of this ;
'Tis my sole comfort to be rid of thee ;
And when we are back in Fez, I will bestow thee
Upon another mistress.

Za. If 'tis Fez,
I care not. I'll commend me to the queen
That shall be of Morocco : why, thou goest
The way to spoil thy fortunes, and dost shanie
The suit of a most high and worthy prince
By favouring the Christian.

Al. Favouring
Darest thou to say ?

Za. I say but what I see.
The infidel is dazzled by thy beauty ;

And if thou dost not love his flatteries,
How is it that thou art found so oft alone
Where he must walk ? that now these three days past
At break of dawn, ere thou wast used to stir
Thou must go forth, because the moon is bright,
Or dwindling stars should be beheld, or flowers
Gathered in dew ; and I, who must be roused
To bear thee company, am in haste dismissed,
Or sent on useless errands, while the prince
Steals in my place ? If I should say 'twas love . . .
Al. Folly ! what folly in thee. And if 'twere true,
Should I need thee to tell me ?
Go fetch my yellow roses.

Za. And in time :
See here he comes.

Al. Begone.
Za. Ay, I must go.
(*Aside.*) But I can send another. [*Exit.*]

Al. What is it I resent ? that others see us
Is our life's evidence : loving as being
Needs this conviction.

Enter Ferdinand.

Fer. What, Almeh ! thou'rt here ?
Dost thou indeed await me ?

Al. Didst thou think
I should play truant like an idle child,
Who, when the clock has struck cannot be found,
And must be dragged to school ?

Fer. O nay. But in this world,
Where all things move outside our reckoning,
To find the least desire hath come to pass
Will seem a miracle.

Al. What is thy desire ?
What is the miracle ?

Fer. O beautiful Almeh !
If I might call thee Christian !

Al. Nay, I know not :
But what I have learned makes me desire the name.

Fer. Now is the purpose of my expedition
Revealed : for this I sailed to Africa :
For this I was defeated, and for this
Brought captive here. 'Tis thou that art my prize.

Al. 'Twere a poor prize for so much war : but tell
me,
How came it thou'rt a soldier ?

Fer. Thou hast thought
My failure shames that title ?

Al. Nay, I ask
How, being a Christian, thou professest arms.
Why hast thou come against us, with no plea
Save thy religion, and that happy gospel
Thou hast trampled on in coming. Peace on earth ?

Fer. 'Tis asked too late. When conscience, like
an angel,

stood in the way to bar my setting forth,
Zeal and ambition blinded me ; tho' yet
Against the voice of them that urged me on
There lacked not prodigies of heaven to stay me.

For as we sailed from Lisbon, all the host
That lined the shore with banners and gay music,
Was changed before my eyes to funeral trains
Of black and weeping mourners, who with wails
And screams affrighted us. The sun in heaven
Turned to blood-red, and doleful mists of grey
Shut us in darkness, while the sucking ebb

Dragged us to doom. And here now that I stand
In the rebuke of judgment, I have no plea
Save that I suffer : unless thou be found
My unsought prize.

Al. Thou missest the conclusion,
Considering but thyself, not those thou hast wronged.
Thou must surrender Ceuta : 'tis a debt
To justice and to peace : my father's honour,
Thy duty towards thy wretched countrymen,
And thine own freedom—

Fer. Let no words between us
Be spoke in vain, as these words now must be.

Al. Were thy words true, my words were not in
vain.

Fer. Lady, were Ceuta mine, had my sword won it,
Thy words might move, though not thy father's threats.

Al. I hear the gate : some one comes forth. I pray
Retire, ere we be seen. [*Exeunt r.*

Enter Sala and Tarudante.

Sa. I owe him life, your highness, and would
stake it

A thousand times upon his princely worth.
As are his manners, you shall find his honour.
I will go fetch him.

Ta. Stay, I understand. 1100
Something, and know that now he is in the grounds
With the princess alone. Go if thou wilt.
Assure thyself : I need to see no more.

Sa. Await me here then while I go. I pray thee
Judge not so hastily.

Ta. I judge not hastily.

Sa. Then wait me here.

Ta. I wait for no man, Sala ;
Save out of courtesy : in which I hope
I have not lacked hitherto.

Sa. You have rather set us
In everlasting debt.

Ta. Speak not of that.

Sa. Then mock not our repayment.

Ta. Look you, Sala ;
I understand to seize a prize by force,
Or kindly take a gift, but not to sue.

Sa. Yet women must be wooed.

Ta. Ay, that's a game :
But if 'tis more than play, I've no mind for it.
Patch up the matter as you can. For me,
I cry To horse.

Sa. Wait but a moment longer ;
I will fetch Ferdinand. (*Aside.*) To have two rivals,
Tho' both be princes, may be better yet
Than to have only one. [*Exit.*

Ta. By heaven, they trifle with me, and by waiting
I allow it ; cherishing an idle softness
That fools me to take slights, yet cannot soothe
My pride to competition. Nay, nor would I
Rob grey-haired Sala of it, if he has dreamed
His heirs shall reign in Fez. . . But the infidel—
How should the general countenance him,—altho'
There be some tie of chivalry between them ?
A riddle it is ; a riddle I leave it. Now
To save engaged honour I must feign

Some exigency. I will go warn my men 1130
That they break camp at sunrise. In three days
All is forgotten. [*Exit.*

Enter Sala with Ferdinand.

Fer. He is not here.

Sa. 'Tis well.

Fer. What wouldst thou, Sala ?

Sa. For thy safety, prince,
And for my honour both, accept the terms,
And go hence while thou mayst.

Fer. Now spare thy words ;
For I am firm.

Sa. Then if thou close the door,
Thou must o'erleap the wall.

Fer. What mean'st thou ?

Sa. Fly.
Feign sickness. I will let thee forth to-night.
Thou shalt be safe beyond pursuit to-morrow,
While yet 'tis thought thou keep'st thy chamber.

Fer. Nay.

Sa. As men will risk their lives to save their lives,
Risk thou thine honour now to save thine honour,—
Ay, and thy life. 'Tis looked for of no man
To make his tongue his executioner ;
Nor any hath this right, to bind his brother
To die when it shall please him.

Fer. O honest Sala,
We wrong thee much in Spain : there art thou deemed
A heartless soldier ; not a bloody tale
That would pass current, but usurps thy name :
Men curse by thee.

Sa. I pray you now return, 1150
And disabuse your friends.

Fer. Ay, that and more
When I return.

Sa. Thou never wilt return,
Unless thou fly at once.

Fer. Tell me the worst.

Sa. What think you, should I slay you with these
hands ?

Fer. Thou, Sala ! why ?

Sa. I spake not empty words.
Fer. Their darkness is to me as emptiness.

Sa. By heaven, I would not now unseal my lips,
But I know him I speak to, and my speech
Shall win thee. Hark, I have been for twenty
years

Familiar with the king, one of his house ; 1160
I have known the princess Almeh from her cradle :
Her father's only child, she hath been to me
My single joy no less : from the first words
She lisped upon my knee, unto this day,
Her sayings and doings have been still the events
Which measured time to me : her childish ways,
Her growth, well-being, happiness, were mine,
Part of my life. When'er I have been away
On distant service, the same couriers

That carried my despatches to the king, 1170
Returned to me with tidings of the child,
Writ for my use, the careful chronicle
Of prattle, with whatever pretty message
She had devised to send me : as she grew
I watched her, taught her, was her friend ; and while
I trod in blood, and heard the mortal gasp
Of foes, my scimitar struck down to hell,
I suffered nothing to approach my soul
But what might too be hers. Sala is stern, 1180
Men say, and register my actions bluntly

To common qualities,—I serve my age
In such a tedious practice,—but in truth,
Sala is gentle as the tend'rest plant
That noonday withers, or the night frosts pinch.
I tell thee what I would not dare tell any,
Lest he should smile at me, and I should slay him :
I tell it thee knowing thou wilt not smile.

Now late it happened that I returned to Fez
After some longer absence than was wont ;
And looking still to meet the child I left, 1190
I found her not. She had made a dizzy flight
From prettiest to fairest. Slow-working time
Had leapt in a miracle : ere one could say,
From being a child suddenly she was a woman,
Changed beyond hope, to me past hope unchanged.
Maybe thou hast never tasted, prince, this sorrow,
When fortune smiling upon those we love
Removes them from our reach—when we awake
To our small reckoning in the circumstance
We are grown to lean on.—Cursed be the day 1200
Whereon we met : or would thou hadst slain me
there—

My wrongs are worse than death.

Fer. How ! can it be ?
Tell me but truth. Art thou my rival, Sala ?
Thou art : thou art. Yet 'twas thyself deceived me.
Thou'st ever spoken of her as of a daughter.
Forgive me, Sala ; thy familiarity
And thy years blinded me. If, ere I came
Her heart was thine, and I by pity's softness
Have stolen the passion that was thine before,
Now by mine honour I will do thy bidding : 1210
If 'tis the only way, I'll fly to-night.
Thy word, and I will fly. Were ye betrothed ?

Sa. Nay, prince . . .
Fer. Nay ? . . . Yet if not betrothed, maybe
Almeh hath loved thee, shown thee preference,
Some promise . . .

Sa. Nay.
Fer. Then, Sala, in plain words,
How have I wronged thee ? what can be the cause
Why thou didst threat to kill me ?

Sa. I said not that.
Fer. Esteem'st thou then a prince of Portugal
So much less than Morocco ?

Sa. Dream'st thou the king
Would wed his daughter to . . .

Fer. An infidel, 1220
Thou'dst say.

Sa. Is't not impossible ?
Fer. 'Twould seem
No miracle to me shouldst thou thyself
Turn Christian.

Sa. By Allah ! Hush ! here is the king. Begone,
Lest my goodwill to thee be more suspected
Than it deserve.

Fer. I'll speak with thee again. [*Exit.*
Sa. (solus). I have shot my best bolt forth, and
missed my aim.

Enter King.

K. Sala, what dost thou here ? I sent for thee.
Sa. No message, sire, hath reached me.

K. I am come myself
To find thee : I need thy counsel, and I desire
Thou wilt put off the manner of advisers, 1230

Who affect disapprobation of whatever
Is done without their sanction ; in which humour
Thou hast looked grudgingly upon the marriage
'Twixt Almeh and Morocco.

Sa. My dislike
Hath better ground.

K. Whate'er it be, I bid thee
Put thy dislike aside : the business threatens
To fail without our aid.

Sa. How so ?

K. The prince
Hath been with us five days : 'tis now full time
He spoke his mind ; and yet he hath said no word.

Sa. Well, sire ?

K. The cause : I'll tell thee first my thoughts.

Sa. The fancy of a maid is as the air—
Light, uncontrollable.

K. What dream is this ?

'Tis not her liking that I count. The day
That Tarudante asks her she is his :

'Tis that he doth not ask.—I have myself perceived
A melancholy habit that hath come
Upon my daughter of late, and grows apace.
I thought awhile 'twas love, but now I fear
'Tis a deep disaffection : such behaviour,
So foreign to her years, might well repel 1250
So fine a lover.

Sa. That is not the cause.

K. I say it is. I have watched her with the prince
Now for two days, and marked in her behaviour
Indifference and abstraction.

Sa. And if 'tis so ?

K. Find some device to drive these humours off.
Did I but know, could we discover, Sala,
What lies the nearest to her heart, a prompt
And unforeseen indulgence would restore
Her spirit to cheerfulness.

Sa. (aside). Now here is hope.
If I could work him to my purpose now. 1260

K. What say'st thou ?

Sa. Sire, the sufferings of the captives
First hurt your daughter's spirit. Would you heal it,
Release them.

K. Eh ! Wellah ! I think thou'rt right.
Twice hath she knelt before me for these men :
I had never thought of it.

Sa. (aside). Heaven give my tongue
Persuasion.

K. I'll do it, Sala : 'tis worth the price.

Sa. There is yet one captive whom you cannot free.

K. Who's he ?

Sa. The prince.

K. He counts not with the rest.

Sa. Nay, since his wrong and claim stand above all.

K. Thou art pleading for thyself, Sala : thou
knowest 1270

I hold the prince for Ceuta.

Sa. So, sire ; for never
Will you hold Ceuta for the prince. You asked
My advice : you have it. Where my honour weighed
not,

Nor my long service finds me any favour,
Suspect not I would use a lady's tears :
Tho' true it be, the grief that Almeh felt
Hath been tenfold increased, since the good prince
Who gave me life was asked to buy his own.

K. But if I free the rest and keep the prince?

Sa. A stinted favour brings no gladness. Yet
You could not more; you cannot, nay you are pledged.

K. Hark, Sala: I care not if he live or die.

Did I not offer him his liberty

On a condition? Since to win Morocco

Is to have Ceuta, I may change my terms,

And use him for that purpose, tho' it stand

One remove from my object: and I see

How I can make a bargain. Fetch my daughter,

For the same day she marries Tarudante

The prince and all the captives shall be hers:

And she shall know it. Send her hither.

Sa. I go.

(Aside.) Yet the condition mars the gift for all.

[Exit Sala.]

K. Nay, he shall not dissuade me. 'Twas good
counsel.

Slipped from him unawares; and tho' I swore

To keep the prince till he surrendered Ceuta,

That oath turned 'gainst myself I will cast o'er,

Making his liberty my tool; and what

Self-interest persuades I'll do with grace.—

That men are strong or weak, foolish or wise,

According to the judgment of their fellows,

Is doctrine for the multitude. For me

I would possess my wisdom as my health,

In reality, not semblance.

Enter Almeh.

Al. My father sent for me?

K. Come hither, Almeh.

I have news for thee;

Al. Good news?

K. Thou shalt say good.

Guess.

Al. There hath something happened?

K. Something shall be.

Al. Is it peace with Portugal?

K. Nay, not so far.

Al. Tell me.

K. The Christian captives.

Al. Dare I guess

They may go free?

K. 'Tis that.

Al. O kindest father,

Thou healest my heart, that hath the chief enlargement

In this deliverance. If they know it not,

May I go tell them?

K. Stay. There's one condition.

It lies with thee to fix the day.

Al. With me?

I say to-day.

K. Thou canst not say to-day.

Al. How soon?

K. 'Tis thus. I make their liberty

A gift to thee the day thou shalt be married.

To Tarudante.

Al. Ah!

K. The smile that came

So quickly to thy face hath fled again.

Is the condition hard?

Al. 'Tis like denial.

K. Denial!

Al. To do the thing I never wished,

And if I wished lies not in me to do.

K. Thou dost not wish, sayst thou? It lies not
in thee?

Al. 'Tis true I do not wish this marriage, sire.

K. Well, well. To wish to leave thy home and me
Were undesired: but to obey my will,

To trust thy welfare to my guidance, girl;

Not to oppose my dictates . . .

Al.

Truly, father,

I have found as little occasion to oppose,

As I have power to stand against thy will.

K. I know it, child: but for that hold thee to

blame:

Thou hast not wished: 'tis in thy power to wish.

Marriage thou dost not wish: but thou must wish

What is my will; which to make more thine own

I add this boon. Was't not thy chief desire?

Dost thou not thank me?

Al.

Alas . . .

K. 'Tis no small gift; the lives of fifty men.

Al. Tell me, sire; with the captives dost thou

reckon

Prince Ferdinand of Portugal?

K.

I knew

Thou wouldst ask this, and am content to grant it.

See how I yield. I will go fetch thy lover:

Be ready to receive him: what thou dost

Ruleth his happiness as well as mine,

And theirs whose life I give thee. Await him here.

[Going.]

Al.

Stay, father, stay!

K.

Well, child!

Al. (aside.)

It cannot be:

I dare not tell—

K.

What wouldst thou say?

Al.

I know not.

I have not well understood; not yet considered.

K.

What is there to consider?

Al.

Dost thou promise

The Christian captives and prince Ferdinand

Shall all, the day I am married, be set free?

K.

I do.

Al.

And if I marry not Morocco,

What is their fate?

K.

They die; unless the prince

Surrender Ceuta to me.

Al.

O sire, the prince

Spared Sala's life: thou owest as much to him:

Thou mayst not kill him.

K.

See, if that's a scruple,

How thou mayst gratify thyself and Sala.

I put this in thy power: Canst not thou thank me,

And smile on Tarudante?

Al.

I thank thee, sire.

If I seemed not to thank thee, 'twas the effect

Of suddenness, nothing but suddenness.

I am glad to do it.

K.

I knew thou wouldst be glad.

I shall go fetch thy lover. I shall not grudge

These hogs for him.

[Exit.]

Al.

Death, said he? He would slay him!

My gentlest prince! O bloody spirit of war,

That hast no ear where any pitiful plea

Might dare to knock.—Alas, my dismal blindness!

I am but as others are, selfish, O selfish,

That thought myself in converse with the skies;

So shamed, so small in spirit. What is my love,

My yesterday's desire, but death to him?
 And what to me? What but an empty fancy
 Nursed against reason? which I cling to now
 In spite of duty. Duty . . . Ah, I remember
 I had a childish fondness for that name,
 Dreamed I would serve God willingly. But now,
 Now 'tis impossible . . . Now if I serve,
 I do his bidding with unwilling will;
 Yet must I do it.

Enter Ferdinand.

Fer. Princess, I come to beg . . . Alas! thy sorrow
 Shows me a greater care.

Al. Nay; ask thy wish.

Fer. 'Tis changed to learn thy grief, and why that
 brightness,
 That shone to cheer my life, now clouds with rain.

Al. Each hath his private grief, prince: why
 should I

Be wondered at, or questioned of my tears?
 Enough the world is sad, and I am sad.

Fer. A twofold error, lady: the world is gay,
 And thou art half its splendour. When I first
 Beheld thee in this earthly paradise,
 What wondrous jewels, thought I, God hath strewn
 About the world, which in our count of it
 Stand out of reckoning, being unseen.

Al. And then
 If I was light of spirit, I knew not why;
 Now,—but thou speakest of some favour: tell me.

Fer. Since my request is guilty of my coming,—
 'Twas for my countrymen: to-day the gate
 Hath not been opened to them.

Al. I am happy, prince,
 Their woes are ended. Ere thou camest hither
 The king was here; and in his kindest mood
 Granted their liberty.

Fer. Thy prayers, lady,
 Must be the sweetest incense that from earth
 Perfumes God's mercy-seat: He bends to soften
 The heart that thou beseechest.

Al. Stay, 'tis thus.
 They are given to me to grace my bridal.

Fer. How!
 Thy bridal?

Al. When I am married where thou knowest,
 The prisoners shall be mine.

Fer. And when thy bridal?
Al. Where'er Morocco, that is come to woo me,
 Shall ask to wed me.

Fer. Lady, forbid me not.
 It needs no skill to read thy sorrow now:
 For coldly speak'st thou, and with trembling tongue—

Al. What think'st thou then?

Fer. Forgive me, if I am bold:
 Thou dost not love him thou art bid to wed.

Al. That were my blame, since he is worthy of me.

Fer. Nay 'tis not that: but if I have guessed the
 truth,

O if thou hast now consented, and wilt sell
 Thyself for pity of these wretched men,
 Now I forbid the odious sacrifice.
 Perchance thou thinkest that these many souls
 Against thy single welfare, must make up
 The greater stake: Not so; they're mites and scraps
 'Gainst thy immeasurable worth: a thousand

Would not complete the thousandth part of thee; 1420
 And were I where their base ill-natured wills

Obeys me, thou shouldst tell them for thy slaves
 As hairs upon thy head. 'Twere heavy tidings
 That thou shouldst love Morocco, and being so far
 Won to the faith, shouldst willingly renounce
 Thy saintly liberty: but rather so,
 Than that by one thou lov'st not; against thy will,
 Thou shouldst be harnessed, 'neath the common yoke.

Al. My will is nothing, prince, and if Morocco
 Already hath three wives, I shall rank first. 1430

Fer. Monstrous! Wilt thou stoop to such servile
 change?

Al. Unwittingly thou speak'st against thyself.

Fer. Alas! what words have injured me with thee?

Al. None: but thy fate is knit in one with theirs,
 Whose happiness thou biddest me now not weigh.

Fer. On that day shall I too be given to thee?

Al. Betray me not, I pray.

Fer. O Mockery!

What hast thou done?

Al. The best for thee.

Fer. For me!

O nay. And for thyself?

Al. Think not of me.

Fer. Not think of thee! My very thoughts of
 heaven 1440

Are thoughts of thee. 'Tis now so short a time,
 Nor have I on my part any desert

To challenge favour at thy gracious hands,
 That I should dare to speak: nor any words

That man hath e'er invented, to combine
 In sentences that mock mortality,

Are proud enough to tell thee; therefore—

I say in plainest speech, Almeh, I love thee.

For thy goodwill I thank thee: but my fate,

If thou dost love me not, or art another's, — 1450

Life or death, misery and imprisonment,

Slavery or freedom, count as little with me,

As when I shall be dead where I may lie,

Say, if thou canst, thou lov'st me: and if not,

Thou shalt at least have heard, and I have told,

My tale; how to prince Ferdinand of Portugal

Thou didst appear the only being on earth

Worth his devotion; that for thy possessing

He would have given all else, to live with thee.

As Christians use, in state of man and wife, 1460

Which God hath blessed.

Al. No more, I pray no more.

The graveyard ghosts are not so waste and dead

As is thy phantom picture.

Fer. Dost thou love me?

Al. Why ask me? Yet be this an hour of truth,

Tho' all time lie. I love thee, Ferdinand,

Even as thou lovest me; would be thy wife,

To live alone with thee as Christians use.

Fer. Almeh! Weep not. Fear nothing, if thou

art mine.

Al. I am nought that is not thine: only thy hope

I cannot share.

Fer. How canst thou love and fear?

See, I can teach thee how to trust in love

Now with this kiss.

Enter King, Tarudante, and Sala.

Al. (seeing K.). Away! My father! my father!

K. What see I?
Sa. (aside). Now could I slay him.
K. (to Tar.). These white-faced Christians
 Have most uncultured manners. *(To F.)* By my soul,
 Prince Ferdinand, thou usest thy liberty
 With small restraint. *(To S.)* Sala, conduct the prince
 Into the dungeon tower: see him there locked.

Tar. (aside). 'Tis as I thought.
K. Begone, I say: my passion
 Brooks not his presence. *[Exit Sala with Ferdinand.]*
Tar. (aside). But what word for her,
 The greater culprit?

K. (to Al.). As for thee, my daughter, 1480
 Retire thou too. Thy blush cannot be cured
 But by this felon's punishment. Moreover,
 Thou dost not well to walk even in these grounds
 Unveiled without attendant. *[Exit Almelh.]*

Tar. (aside). 'Tis well said,
 Without attendant. *(To K.)* With us, your majesty,
 The women all go veiled.

K. And so with us
 The custom is approved, and general.
 But license hath been granted to my daughter
 And her attendants, when within the walls.
 Nor wilt thou find her modesty is touched 1490
 By such concession. As for Ferdinand,
 Thou shalt decree his punishment.

Ta. Nay, sire;
 I shall not ask that. I have here a letter
 Writ by my father, urging my return:
 He needs my troops. I look for your permission
 To take my leave to-night. As for the matter
 Which brought me here, the service I was able
 To render your majesty has given me
 Much pleasure, as the recital will my father,
 And should confirm our friendship. I confess 1500
 'Tis disappointment to me that the league
 Cannot be knit by marriage, and to have seen
 The princess hath much sharpened my regret.
 Could she have loved me; I had held myself
 Not so unworthy of her grace.

K. Stay, stay.
 Pray misinterpret not this fool's presumption
 As her consent.

Ta. O nay.
K. I see thou'rt wronged.
 I bear thee no ill-will for thy resentment:
 I should feel shame for thee wert thou not shamed:
 But all shall be atoned for: the unbeliever 1510
 Shall pay full penalty. Thou shalt decree it.

Ta. Might that rest with me, I'd be quit of him;
 Deal courteously, and send him home to Spain
 To wive among his kin.

K. Be not so hasty.
 Make not so much of this. I promise thee
 All shall be well: Stay, prince, and Ferdinand
 Shall lose his head this very day.

Ta. Your majesty
 Mistakes me; I cannot sue. My troops are warned.

K. Cannot I stay thee? Now, by God, ill done.
 I am wronged, wronged.

Ta. Farewell, sire: in such a soreness
 Few words are wisest. What Allah forbids
 Must be renounced. 'Tis of necessity
 I now depart. Yet should you need me again,
 Send, and I come. God's peace be with you. *[Exit.]*

K. He is gone—
 Incredible! Consenting: I could not gloss it:
 Before my eyes, the eyes of Africa.
 Is this her secret? this her melancholy
 That cannot love? Treachery and apostasy!
 Or is it that sick passion, some have suffered
 For things strange and detestable. I will see her:
 She shall renounce it.—Holla! *(Calling.)* Ho!
 within—
 No cure but that: immediate disavowal,
 Ere 'tis too late. O shame! *(Calls.)* Ho there, within?

Enter Servant.

(To servant.) Give word that the princess attend me
 here. *[Exit servant.]*

That devil knows; he looked as if he knew.
 And Sala knew it. 'Twas for this he urged
 The villain's liberty. He shall go free
 To hell . . . and I will grant such liberty
 To all who have seen him. There's one hiding-place,
 Where I may stow dishonour. But for her, 1540
 My daughter; if yet perchance there is any spot
 In all her heart untainted by this shame
 Which I may reach, that natural piety
 May feel my yearning sorrow . . . Tenderly,

Enter Almelh.

Tenderly must I work: Lo, where she comes,
 Her shameful head bowed down with consciousness.
 Come, Almelh, come; come nearer. See:
 Thy tender grace, thy beauty's perfect flower,
 The vesture of thy being; all thy motions,
 Thoughts, and imaginations, thy desires, 1550
 Fancies, and dreams; whate'er from day to day
 Thou art, and callst thyself, what is it all
 But part of me? Art thou the beauteous branch,
 I am the gnarled trunk that bore and bears thee:
 The root that feeds. I call thee not to judgment;
 Only to save what most I prize, thy name,
 And mine: there's one way that can be: Morocco
 Hath taken his leave: before he leave must thou
 Beg him to see thy injury avenged,
 And for thine honour's sake must on thy knees 1560
 Bid me revenge it. If on the same day
 The Christian prince insulted thee he die,
 And die at thy request, before the eyes
 That saw thy shame, ere busy tongues can tell
 A tale in the ear, such speedy penalty
 Will fright the scandal to a tale of terror,
 And save our name. Withal he is a prince,
 And that a prince should die may well atone.
 What sayst thou, child?

Al. Bid me not speak.
K. Thy tears 1570
 And sobs I cannot read. I bid thee speak.

Al. O father!
K. Speak!

Al. Thy words, recall thy words.

K. What words?

Al. Thy words of blood.

K. Ah, Almelh! Almelh!

Art thou my daughter?

Al. O sire, on my knees

I beg.

K. Well, what?

Al. His life! his life!

K. Ali, traitress.

Al. Was not thy first condition hard enough,
To save prince Ferdinand that I should marry
Another? and I consented: but when now
Thou knowest I love him . . .

K. Love him. Thou confessest!

Al. I hid it from thee but to save his life;
Now I avow it to save him. If thou'rt wronged, ¹⁵⁸⁰
'Tis I have wronged thee: so if one must die
Let it be me.

K. Then perish all of us.

Al. Nay, why, when peace hath such a simple way,
When kindness would cure all? If thou wouldst see
How noble he is, how true . . .

K. Silence! speak not
What thou hast dared to think lest I should curse thee.
I in my house to see God's holy laws
Reversed; my blood contaminate abroad
With infidels! Fly quickly. What thou hast said
Will keep thee prisoned till thy heart is changed.
Go to thy chamber. I will send thee soon
Physic to cure thee. From my sight! Away,
Traitor, apostate.

Al. O father, by thy love . . .

K. Away! away!

Al. By all God's pity I pray thee:
For pity of me.

K. Begone, lest I should strike thee.

Al. Strike me, and I will bear it. I did the wrong.
Punish me and pardon. I only ask for him,
Take not his life.

K. The more thou pleadest for him,
The more I hate him.

Al. Heaven will soften thee.
Thou must relent. Thou wilt not slay us both. ¹⁶⁰⁰

K. Begone, I say. *[Exit Almeh.]*
May all the plagues of hell
Torture these Christians evermore. I see
No safe revenge. Kill him? and the worst believed?
And he my hope of Ceuta? I cannot kill him.
It needs considerate action. Hola there. *(Calling.)*
I'll speak with Sala. Hola there, hola!

Enter Servant.

Bid Sala attend me here. *[Exit servant.]*
And if he blame me,
Because I harked not to him at the first,
He will not thwart my resolution now,
When policy and revenge are bound together. ¹⁶¹⁰
'Tis changed. The Christian now hath done a wrong,
For which his death is due: I have my plan:
I'll starve him till he yield. I'll force him to it
By chains and torture till his stubborn pride
Pay down his ransom humbly.

Enter Sala.

Sa. Peace be with you.

K. The devil take thy mocking salutation.
I have three matters for thee: attend. The first
Is that Morocco leaves us, and with him
Our army is gone; whereon the second follows:
Thou must send forth with speed to all the towns ¹⁶²⁰
To levy succours; and thy forces here,
Disordered in the war, visit thyself,
Reform, and make report. The third is this,
My will concerning Ferdinand,—and let that

Be first in thine attention;—'tis his death.

My hospitality which he hath wronged,
I now withhold . . . to death—thou understandest?
And more, 'tis death to any that shall give him
A crust or drop of water: and I will change ¹⁶³⁰
His entertainment. Set him in the stables
To serve the grooms: put chains upon his feet:
Appoint a guard to enforce his tasks, and make
Mouleh their serjeant. For the execution
I hold thee liable. Let not his life
Outdrag three days. But hark: in spite of vengeance,
And in remembrance of his claim on thee,
He may go quit upon the old condition,
Ceuta:—thou understandest? Go tell him this,
The only hope my clemency allows, ¹⁶⁴⁰
But of my provocation not a word.
Be thou in time prepared to clear thyself
Of having known this mischief and concealed it.

Sa. My liege . . .

K. Begone and do my will. Thy words
Save to persuade the prince. Speak not to me.
It angers me to see thee. Go. I have done.

[Exit Sala.]

Three days I said; three days. Within that time,
Unless I have my town, I'll be revenged.

ACT IV.

Zapel and Sala, meeting.

Sa. What tidings, Zapel? I have been all day
away,
And had no word.

Za. There's none of good to tell.
She hath neither ate nor slept.

Sa. Will she not eat? ¹⁶⁵⁰

Za. Nothing.

Sa. 'Tis the third day.

Za. Nor will she sleep.
She fights 'gainst sleep, as if 'twere death. Like one
That must keep watch against its soft approaches,
Sitting upon her couch with head inclined
She mourneth to herself, and 'twixt her sighs
What words may be distinguished overlook
Her own distress, and squander their laments
Upon an unknown sorrow, which she says
Enwraps the world. Or sometimes she will sing ¹⁶⁶⁰
The melancholy strains which she hath heard
The Christian captives use.

Sa. 'Tis a brain-sickness:
Miserable.

Za. And ever, when I have tried to cheer her,
Hath she rebuked me, as she is wont; but gently,
And bid me leave her: Then to meet her humour
I have gone, but made occasion to return,
Bringing such simple food as best she likes,
Freshly prepared to tempt her; and with tears
I pray her but to taste: yet she endures,
And saith, "I thank thee, Zapel: tho' I eat not,
Thy skill is not misspent stretching the rack ¹⁶⁷⁰
That proves my constancy. I prithee, girl,
Set fresh and fresh before me." Hearing this
I weep for pity: but she saith, "Be sure
I shall not taste thy dishes, till one eat

Who is now denied."

Sa. Doth she not speak his name?

Za. Rarely and reverently, as a name of God.
Then I am sent to learn the last; if yet
He lives, and whether he hath spoke of her. This
morn,

As I returned from such unhappy quest,
She gave me this: See, 'tis a letter for him . . . 1680

[*Showing letter.*]

Sa. Thou darest!

Za. O sir, the piteous prayer she made,
Kneeling and clasping me about the knees,
Went to my heart. But now I have it I fear
To have broke the king's command. I prithee take it.

Sa. Give 't me. [*Takes.*]

Za. To see her thus, Allah forgive me,
I wish well to the infidel. What word
Shall I take back?

Sa. Say truth. I will deliver it.
And tell her prince Enrique is returned:
He is camped a league away, and in such force
As makes me hope I may persuade the king 1690
To yield to his demand. Since there's this hope,
Bid her preserve her strength bravely, nor thus
Prejudge God's will. His blessing add thy words.

[*Exit Zapel.*]

I said there's hope. 'Twas hope that bade me lie,
For none I see. And this is misery,
To cherish consolations, and be happy
Doing the loathed thing. Am I content
To bear a letter of Almeh's to her lover?
Allah is great. My best desire is only
To save her,—my one hope that the prince should
yield: 1700

And no persuasion but her love will move him.
This letter will entreat him; I must carry it.

Enter King.

K. Sala, make haste: a herald from Enrique.
This to me: Read. Edward of Portugal
Is dead. His eldest son being but a babe,
A regency now governs, and the rulers
Are prince Enrique and this Ferdinand.
The other I cannot read, and 'tis addressed
To Ferdinand. I doubt not that it urges
Acceptance of my terms and quick return. 1710

Sa. I pray it be so. Is it your pleasure, sire,
To speak with Ferdinand?

K. Ay, fetch him hither.
The dog being master now may change his mind.

Sa. And will you see him in his shameful dress?

K. Nay, that is past:—his own, and with his sword.

Sa. And his despatch; shall I not bear it to him?

K. Ay. Give it him; take it. Stay. [*Aside.*]
I never know

What it may say. Better to try him first
Without its knowledge. Should I fail 'twere time
To use it then. [*To Sala.*] Give it me. I'll keep it
back. 1720

What is this other paper? [*Seeing A.'s letter.*]

Sa. I pray, my liege,
Ask not.

K. I'll know.

Sa. I pray you trust me, sire.

K. Trust thee! what means this?

Sa. 'Tis a forbidden paper.

'Twould anger you to see it.

K. By heaven, I am angered
Before I see it. What is it thou wouldst hide?

Sa. It is a letter which I have intercepted
From Almeh to the prince. If you have pity
On your own flesh, beseech you, let me use it
As I judge fit.

K. And well discovered now.
By God, wouldst thou play carrier? Give it to me.

Sa. It hath not been five minutes in my hands.

K. And shall not be. [*Takes.*] Go fetch the prince.

Sa. If you should read it, sire, and find therein
Messages of such softness as might melt
The stubbornness of Ferdinand, I pray you,
For her sweet sake that writ it, let it go
And do its errand.

K. Go thou and do thine. [*Exit Sala.*]

Will he too plot against me! Let us see

What style she dares. *Thy death, O my beloved,*

Already is avenged.—O very tenderly, 1740

And most determined.—*Willingly I suffer*

What pains of thine I may. 'Tis all my joy

To have taken neither food nor rest

Since first thou wert deprived; nor will I take

Till thou be respited.—Why this might move him,

Oh, if thou diest!—Ah, great heavens,

What read I here? Now I see all. Baptized!

Baptized in secret by thy countrymen.

Baptized! Then let her perish. She is dead.

I cast her off. *Till now I hid this from thee,* 1750

Doubting my worthiness.—He doth not know it.

He shall not know. None shall know. We will die.

I will slay all. I will go down to the grave,

And plead my cause before the holy angels,

Whether it may be permitted for a princess

Against her father and faith . . .—Nay, is't not writ

There is there no vain discourse nor charge of sin,

But pleasure to the faithful? And I to die

With house and kingdom shamed! How would my

crown

Shine 'mong the blessed caliphs, and the martyrs

Who fell in fight upon the road of God?

How would they look upon me,

If 'mong their moonbright scimitars I came,

My child's blood on my head? and she not there,

The fair flower of my life, the bud of grace,

Which my long-withering and widowed tree

Held to the face of heaven,

Now from my own trunk by my own hands torn.

Better the bole be split: heaven's lightning rend me:

All curses seize me. Almeh, thou must not die. 177

Enter Sala.

Sa. Prince Ferdinand will come.

K. Is he not here?

Sa. He comes.

K. Why look'st thou thus upon me, Sala?

Sa. Because, sire, thou'st dishonoured me, and
slain

A noble warrior, who gave me life.

K. Slain him!

Sa. Ay, king: except thou raise the dead.

For tho' he breathes, 'tis with such failing gasps

As mastering death allows to his sure prey.

K. Thou art over-fearful; three days without food

Should make him weak and faint, but not to death.

Nay, I am determin'd now he shall not die.
Food will restore him. Set me here a table
With meat and drink : here in the garden set it,
And he shall eat at once. See it be done,
And quickly.

Sa. Sire, I obey : tho' 'tis too late. *[Exit.]*

During the King's following speech, servants come in with table, etc., which they set down, and go out.

K. He must not die, since only by his life
I can save Almek : and 'tis not too late.
The sight of food will tempt, the taste restore him :
He will yield. I have here too what will move him,
This letter ; were he built of Atlas stone.
For Almek's sake he must relent. I know,
I see what must be done. I can consent :
For such alliance with an ancient foe
Is honourable. Peace between the realms,
Happiness to both houses—bought may be
With sacrifice on my side—yet there's pride
On both to balance : and this way refused
'Tis hell and death. And he will thank me too.
He is brave and noble ; and the stoutest foes
Are won to stoutest friendship. See he comes.

Enter Fer., upborne between two Moorish soldiers.

Prince Ferdinand, our quarrel comes to end.
A message has arrived from prince Enrique.
Your brother Edward, that was king, is dead.
Wherefore the power which I have used on thee
I now relax. I have a gentler purpose
And a persuasion thou mayst guess ; while thou
Owing no loyalty but to thyself
I am well assured wilt not be slow to meet me.
Sit with me first and eat : when thou'rt restored
We will compose these matters at our leisure :
Which done, and peace agreed, thou mayst return
In time to pay thy brother's memory
The sorrow it deserves : and in his place
Govern the Portuguese. See, there's thy life,
Thy strength and restoration. Sit and eat.

Fer. I feel no hunger, sire. The time is past
When thou couldst save my life.

K. Despair not.

Fer. Nay,
I do not know the word.

K. This is despair.

Come, sit and eat.

Fer. I say the wish is past.

K. Dost thou not then believe? See in this paper
Write to thyself. *(Gives.)*

(Aside.) Life doth not tempt this man.
The call to rule his people yet may move him.
What readst thou now therein?

Fer. What thou hast said.
My brother Edward's soul rest in God's peace!

K. Is nought else in thy paper?

Fer. Ay, there's more.
I'd not conceal it. Prince Enrique writes,
If I return not to his camp to-night,
He comes himself in force to rescue me.

K. Trust not to such deliverance.

Fer. Nay, O king :
For cometh he at even or at morn,
To-morrow or to-day, he cometh late.
My eyes and morns are pass'd, and my deliverance

Is nearer than his coming : yet for that,
Tho' I shall see him not when he doth come,
Not the less will he come ; for so he saith.

K. Thou wilt not eat and live?

Fer.

I thank thee, sire.

K. *(to attendants).* Set the prince in the chair,
and all go out ;
And send the guard within.

[They obey. As they go out they take with them the sentinel from the pit gate. From this point the stage gradually begins to darken to end of act.]
Now, prince, we are left alone, eat what I give thee.
[Puts food towards him.]

Fer. Why should I eat?

K. *(pouring).* Myself I pour the wine.
Drink with me. 'Tis thy life.

Fer.

Why should I live?

K. Canst thou not guess? I'll tell thee then, and
speak

Not as a foe. Thy will hath conquered mine ;
And if I wronged thee, thou hast wronged me more.
Thou hast loved my daughter, and strangely won her
love

Away from him whom for my son I had chosen,
And pillar of my house : thou hast driven away
My best ally, and left my kingdom naked :—
For this thy death would be but fair revenge.
And there's a secret cause why I should hate thee
Above all this ; thou hast suborned my daughter :
She hath denied her faith. See there : *(gives letter)*
see there,

What she hath writ. Read all. Seest thou not now?
'Tis true, she kills herself ; she dies for thee.
Yet I'll forgive thee ; tho' she is none of mine,
Apostate, disobedient.—Yet for her
I will forgive thee. See, 'tis for her sake
I pray thee eat.

Fer.

Too late, 'twould be too late.

K. Say not too late : that word is death. Thou'rt
brave.

Tho' not for me, yet for her sake I bid thee
Eat, drink, and live. So she may live, and thou—
The altitude of thrones may overlook
Such differences—I give her thee to wife.
Save us, I pray.

Fer.

What hear I? wouldst thou then
Have given me in good faith Almek to wife?

[Makes motions towards food.]

K. And will. Ay, drink.

Fer.

And Ceuta?

K.

That is mine,

Her price.

Fer. *(thrusting things from him).* Ah, never.

K. Dost thou then refuse?

Fer. It cheereth death to spend my last breath thus.

K. Sittest thou there balanced 'twixt death and life,
Daintily making choice, and to my offer
Of all that God could grant thee, life and love,
Wrung from me by my sorrow, to my shame
Preferrest the Christian hell? O Infidel
Apostatizing dog, lest now thy mouth
Should find the power to gasp one broken speech
Of triumph over me, die at my hand.
Death shall not rob me of thy blood that's left.

[Stabs Fer. across the table.]

Thus let thy brother find thee, if I fail

To send him also thither, where thou goest
To thine idolatrous and thieving sires.

[Exit.

Enter from pit Chorus . . . Twilight.

CHORUS (*inter se*).

We come with laboured breath
Climbing from underground :—
In fear we creep and quake :—
What voice with furious sound,
Choking in wrath outspake
The names of blood and death ?—
Who is here ?—Look around.—
Hearken !—the broken moan
Of the ever-murmuring sea
Reaches my ear alone—
Come forward, ye may dare,
All is quite still and free.—
Ah, stay ! behold him there,
That sitteth with his head
Upon his breast bent low—
The prince—the prince.—Forbear,
He sleepeth.—Nay, I fear,
Now may the truth strike dead
My terror—step thou near—
Gently.—Alas ! woe, woe,
Woe, woe, woe, woe, he is dead.
He sits dead in his chair.

1890

1890

1900

See at his heart, where yet
The murderous wound is wet.—
Our prince, our prince is dead—
They have slain him in their spite—
Ai, ai, ai, ai ! Who now

Can save us ? We are lost men, friends ; we are lost—
And thou, who saidst that we should live to fight,
Where are thy arms ? Didst thou not make a boast
That thou couldst see God's will ?—We are quite for-
saken,

1910

Forgotten—(1.) Refrain, refrain. Can God forget ?
Ch. Who could refrain ? Alas ! Hath not long woe
Crushed us so low ?—Ah me ! This is our pain.—
Now we deplore, alas !—Hell and despair !—
Now it is plain—O woe—we are no more
What once we were.—

(1.) Renew your courage, and devote your care
In solemn duty to the dead. Upraise
This noble corpse, and bear it to the bower ;
Where, roofed by rose and jasmine, it may lie
Hid from the dews of swift descending night.
Take ye the feet, while I uplift the head,
And, grasping in the midst, ye, by his robe,
Bear him with slow accommodated step,
Where we may best dispose his limbs in peace.

1920

[*Exeunt bearers with Fer.'s body to bower.*

Bearers. Alas, ah ! noble prince,
What burial wilt thou have ?
Far from where thy fathers lie,
In a heathen grave,
If grave they give thee at all.
Yet will thy country mourn ;
And where victorious banners hang,
And hymns of Christian joy are sung,
Upraise thine empty tomb.

1930

The others. We see our fate to-night. Thus shall
we die.—

If thus they treated him how shall we fare ?—

Who bids us hope ?—There is no hope, no hope :
I'll mask my thought no more.

Bearers re-enter from bower.

Ch. (1.) (*Who has Fer.'s letter and sword.*)

We are saved ! we are saved !

Ch. How saved ?—How so ?—Tell us !—

(1.) This letter here.

Ch. What letter ? say.

(1.) 'Tis from the prince Enrique.

Ch. Read ! read !

(1.) 'Tis written to prince Ferdinand,

In our home speech. 'Twas in his grasp.

Ch. Read ! read !

(1.) *Unless I have thee in my camp to-night,
At morn I rescue thee.*

Ch. Where is the camp ?

(1.) A league hence to the west, he writes.

Ch. Alas !

Now they have slain his brother he will not come.—

Or, should he come, then in the siege he makes

Hunger will slay us all.—

(1.) Hark then to me. (*Stage darkens more.*)

He lying so near we may escape to him.

Ch. How shall we escape ?—The guards upon the
walls

1930

Would see us.—They would send pursuit of horse
To cut us down.—

(1.) Not now. I said not now ;

But later in darkest night.

Ch. And how to escape ?

(1.) See here the prince's sword : with this in hand

To creep at midnight on our sentinel,

And slay him : then in darkness unperceived

To climb out o'er the wall.

Ch. Now sayst thou well.

(1.) Ye trust me now ?

Ch. Ay, ay : if thou canst kill him.

(1.) Obey me, and I will lead you forth to-night.

Ch. What to do ?

(1.) Hush ye ! Our careless sentinel

Must soon return. Let him not see us here.

Begone, and some take up this food and wine,

Which we may share below to help our strength,

Hiding it 'neath your garments, as do I

The sword. With silent step troop to your shades.

[*Exeunt. As they go out the stage darkens quite.*

*Enter K. and Sala, Left. There is light on them
from the doorway, where they stand awhile.*

K. Come forth and see !

Sa. The night hath wrapped thy deed

In fourfold darkness, that I should not see.

K. Thine eyes are strained by the light within :
'Tis not so dark but we shall see anon.

Sa. I have loved thee, sire, so well : served thee
so long . . .

1970

K. What sayst thou ?

Sa. I complain 'tis ill-repaid.

I am ill-repaid.

K. Sala !

Sa. Prince Ferdinand

Had given me life.

K. Stay. Why harbourest thou still

That grudge against me ? Didst thou read her letter
I gave thee ?

Sa. I did.
 K. Thou didst : and canst not guess ?
 To save her life I yielded. I consented
 To make this man my son. If he would live
 And give up Centa, then I promised him
 Almeh to wife.
 Sa. What hear I ?
 K. When he refused,
 I smote him through.
 Sa. Refused !
 K. There where he sits.
 Sa. Can this be truth ?
 K. Ay, by the prophet. Ha !
 He is gone.
 Sa. Nay, none is here.
 K. He hath yet found strength
 To crawl away to die. 'Twill not be far.
 Hark ! heardest thou that ? Again. [*Sighing heard.*
 Sa. 'Twas some one sighed.
 K. 'Twas that way, Sala : seek about.
 Sa. The moon
 Is up, but curtained by yon inky cloud,
 Cannot shine forth. Let me go fetch a lantern.
 K. Go, go. I will watch here. [*Exit Sala.*
 Why should I fear ?
 I'll draw my sword. (*Calling.*) Ferdinand !
 (*The sighing again.*) If thou canst speak, say where
 thou art. 1990
 Answer me : Dost thou live ? nay, sigh not so.
 If yet thou livest I think I would abate. (*The sighing.*)
 Now 'tis here, now 'tis there. Thank heaven, the
 moon :
 (*Moon appears, and shows ghost of Ferdinand
 midway back.*)
 I see him. He stands upright ! Prince Ferdinand !
 He walketh from me. Stay. I bid thee stand,—
 By heaven, or I will slay thee. Villain, traitor !
 [*Goes after ghost, makes a lunge at him, and
 ghost vanishes.*
 Enter Sala.
 Sa. What noise is that ? What, sire : with thy
 sword drawn !
 K. Didst thou not see him ?
 Sa. The Prince ?
 K. Ay.
 Sa. Was it the prince
 You spake with ?
 K. Ay, he lives.
 Sa. And drew you upon him ?
 K. I called to him, Sala, and he made away :
 I followed him to slay him.
 Sa. Thank God he lives.
 You did not strike him.
 K. Nay, I struck him not.
 Sa. 'Tis now like day. I see him nowhere, sire.
 K. He hath hid himself. Look, Sala ; search
 about.
 I'll sit awhile. See ; why the food is gone,
 The food that he refused. He hath eaten all.
 His weakness was but feigned.
 Sa. I'll search about.
 K. He stood and walked upright as if unhurt.
 Yet how, unless he be a devil in flesh
 Could he have 'scaped my mortal thrust ?
 Sa. (*in the armour.*) Alas ! 2010

He is here, he is dead.
 K. How now ! he is dead ? [*Goes to armour.*
 Sa. (*coming out.*) He is slain.
 May heaven forgive thee ! (*Aside.*) Murdered, most
 basely murdered,
 And by this shifty, inconsiderate king.
 Murdered for pride ; because he would not take
 The gift that was begrudged. Oh, Almeh, Almeh,
 Thou hadst a noble and a gentle lover.
 K. (*re-entering.*) How came he there, Sala ?
 How could I see him ?
 'Tis true he is dead and cold.
 Sa. The Christian captives
 Have caused our error. They have eaten the food,
 And laid their prince's body in the bower : 2020
 It was their sighing that we heard, re-echoed
 From the deep pit.
 K. By heaven,
 I saw him, Sala, when the moon shone out :
 He stood upright before me ; while I spoke
 He walked away.
 Sa. 'Tis like your majesty
 Hath been deluded by some airy vision
 Bred in the troubled brain.
 K. Nay, he was there.
 Sa. The spirits of the dead have power to fix
 The image of their presence in the place
 Where life was robbed : there are a thousand stories
 Of such frail apparitions.
 Enter Messenger.
 K. Who cometh here ?
 Mess. Your majesty's command.
 K. I know thee : speak.
 Mess. The scouts returned report the Christians
 camped
 To north of Alrah on the stream's left bank.
 They do not hold the hill, and set no guard
 Save on their front.
 K. What numbers are they guessed ?
 Mess. At some four thousand : and prince Fer-
 dinand
 Is with them.
 K. Who ?
 Mess. The scouts, your majesty,
 Spake of prince Ferdinand's escape. They saw him
 Ride at full speed into the Christian camp. 2040
 K. When saw they him ?
 Mess. At dusk.
 K. It could not be.
 Mess. They tell he galloped thro' their company.
 They might have touched him. When they called his
 name
 He took no heed. Some fired their pieces at him :
 And some pursued : but he, as tho' his horse
 Were winged, held on, nor ever turned his head,
 And soon was out of reach.
 K. Enough. Begone. [*Exit Messenger.*
 I knew I had seen him, Sala : 'tis his spirit.
 What is thy counsel ?
 Sa. Think no more of this.
 Take a sufficient force within the walls : 2050
 The rest entrenched upon the hill without,
 We must abide their coming on at dawn.
 K. What is your force ?
 Sa. At most eight hundred men.

K. We are so o'ermatched, Sala, I shall not wait, I shall assault their camp to-night. The darkness Will hide our numbers : we will steal upon them.

Sa. I pray you, sire, be well advised. Consider, If our small force be sundered in the darkness. . . .

K. The darkness is our friend. We know the ground.

Would I could blot the moon from heaven to-night. My plan is fixed. Take thou five hundred men And steal upon their rear, when battle joins I with the rest will charge their front.

Sa. My duty Bids me dissuade thee, ere I can obey.

K. I am brave to fight, Sala : but not to wait ; I will not wait an hour ; nay, not an instant. Thou wilt not move me. Not a word, I bid thee. 'Tis my last hope. Come, get thy men together : If once they hear these hellish tales, we are lost.

ACT V.

Moonlight. Almeh entering, followed by Zapel.

Za. My lady, I pray come back. 2070
The night is sharp and cold : thou art not clad To encounter its brisk sting.

Al. Nay, I must breathe. I fell into a stifling slumber, Zapel ; And woke affrighted in a sweat of terror.

Za. For heaven's sake, lady, let thy spirit be soothed : Thou killest thyself.

Al. Air, air ! that from the thousand frozen founts Of heaven art rained upon the drowsy earth, And gathering keenness from the diamond ways Of faery moonbeams visitest our world 2080 To make renewal of its jaded life. Breathe, breathe ! 'Tis drunken with the stolen scents Of sleeping pinks : faint with quick kisses snatched From roses, that in crowds of softest snow Dream of the moon upon their blanch'd bowers. I drink, I drink.

Za. If thou wilt tarry here, Let me go fetch thy cloak.

Al. Where is my father ?

Za. He is not in the castle.

Al. Where is Sala ?

I must speak with him.

Za. They are both sallied forth To assault the Christian camp.

Al. O then 'twas true The noise I heard. They are fighting : 'twas the guns, The shouts I heard. I thought 'twas in my ears. —I have had strange visions, Zapel, these last days : 'Twere past belief what I have seen and heard. I'll tell thee somewhat when I have time—O love,

If thou would'st be my muse,

I would enchant the sun ;

And steal the silken hues,

Whereof his light is spun :

And from the whispering way 2100

Of the high-arching air

Look with the dawn of day

Upon the countries fair.

Za. See I will fetch thy cloak.

Al. This is the reason Why all's so quiet. Sweet peace, thou dost lie.

Men steal forth silently to kill : they creep, That they may spring to murder. Who would think, Gazing on this fair garden, as it lieth

Lulled by the moonlight and the solemn music 2110

Made everlastingly by the grave sea,

That 'twas a hell of villany, a dungeon

Of death to its possessors. Death.—

Za. (re-entering). Here is thy cloak.

Al. Away ! what dost thou think,

Zapel, of death ? I'll tell thee. Nay, I promise

I've much to tell.—Thou'st heard, when one is dead,

An angel comes to him where he lies buried,

And bids him sit upright, and questions him

Of Islam and Mohammed. 'Tis not so.

For in my dream I saw the spirits of men

Stand to be judged : along the extended line 2120

Of their vast crowd in heaven, that like the sea

Swayed in uncertain sheen upon the bounds

Of its immensity, nor yet for that

Trespassed too far upon the airy shores,

I gazed. The unclouded plain, whereon we stood,

Had no distinction from the air above,

Yet lacked not foothold to that host of spirits,

In all things like to men, save for the brightness

Of incorruptible life, which they gave forth.

Wondering at this I saw another marvel : 2130

They were not clothed nor naked, but o'er each

A veil of quality or colour thrown

Showed and distinguished them, with bickering glance

And gemlike fires, brighter or undiscerned.

As when the sun strikes on a sheet of foam

The whole is radiant, but the myriad globes

Are red or green or blue, with rainbow light

Caught in the gauzy texture of their coats,—

So differed they. Then, as I gazed, and saw 2140

The host before me was of men, and I

In a like crowd of women stood apart,

The judgment, which had tarried in my thought,

Began : from out the opposed line of men

Hundreds came singly to the open field

To take their sentence. There, as each stepped forth,

An angel met him, and from out our band

Beckoned a woman spirit, in whose joy

Or gloom his fate was written. Nought was spoken,

And they who from our squadron went to judge

Seemed, as the beckoning angel, passionless. 2150

Woman and man, 'twas plain to all that saw

Which way the judgment went : if they were blessed,

A smile of glory from the air around them

Gathered upon their robes, and music sounded

To guide them forward : but to some it happed

That darkness settled on them. As a man

Who hears ill tidings wraps his cloak about him,

For grief, and shrouds his face, not to be seen ;

So these by their own robes were swallowed up,

That thinned to blackness and invisible darkness, 2160

And were no more. Thus, while I wondered much

How two fates could be justly mixed in one,

Behold a man for whom the beckoning angel

Could find no answering woman, and I watched

What sentence his should be ; when I myself

Was 'ware that I was called. A radiant spirit

Waited for me. I saw prince Ferdinand :—

Go tell him that I am here.

Za. I cannot, lady.

Al. The king and Sala are gone forth to fight :
There's none can know. Be not afraid. Obey.

Za. Alas ! alas !

Al. Why dost thou stand and wail ?

Za. Oh, I would serve thee ; alas ! but 'tis too late.

Al. Too late ! how is't too late ? If he were dead . . .

Za. Lady, bear up, I pray thee : for 'tis sure
Thy dream betrayed the truth.

Al. The truth ! Alas !

Thou dost believe he is dead. Why, folly, think

How could I then be living ? It could not be

That I, a feeble woman, full of faintings

And fears, were more enduring to outlast

The pangs of hunger than is he, a man

Whom hardship hath injured. Nay, while I live

He must be living.

Za. True it is he is dead.

Al. Thou art suborned : thou liest, thou dost.

Confess.

Za. O nay.

Al. Now God have pity, or thou hast lied.
But thou hast lied. Didst thou not say the king
Sent for him forth ? Didst thou not know the cause ?
His brother has returned in force to take him.

Didst thou not see the dungeon door set wide ?

And dar'st lie thus ?

Za. (aside). Alas ! what can I say ?

(To *Al.*) Here is a chair : I pray thee sit awhile,
I will go find him if I may.

Al. (aside). She lied.

Now she will fetch him. (To *Za.*) Where's the seat ?

Za. Here, there.

Al. I am dizzy. Lead me to it. Go fetch the
prince.

Za. Be comforted.

Al. Who hath sat here, I say ?

Who hath sat here ?

Za. Prithee be comforted.

Al. If this should be . . .

Za. Verily we are God's.

And unto Him return.

Al. Thou, thou ! Begone.

Stay, Zapel, here : give me my cloak. I am cold.
Since I must die . . . think not this strange, I pray.
Bring food to me.

Za. Thank God. 'Tis the sea air

Hath quickened thee.

Al. Thinkst thou that vexed monsters
Hath any physic in his briny breath
For grief like mine ?

Za. Lady, have better heart.

Why, thou must live. When once thy tears have fallen
Thou wilt be comforted.

Al. How should I weep ?

Bid men weep who with their light-hearted sin

Make the world's misery : bid women weep.

Who have been untrue to love and hope : but I

Why should I weep ? Begone : bring me food here.

Za. O that I am glad to do. Thank God for this.

[Exit.]

Al. Why did she lie to me ? Had they a plot
To make me think he is dead ? Sala's my friend :
Sala sent word of hope : and if he lives

All may be saved. Nay, if he be not gone,

If yet he is in the castle, I may find him.

I'll give him food : we will steal forth together :

I have marked the way : and by the rocks of the shore

We may lie hid till we may reach the camp.

Now would I had kept my strength. Had I foreseen

This chance . . . There's none about. 'Tis not too
late.

[Noise of guns and fighting heard.]

I may dare call. Prince Ferdinand ! Good heart,

What noise of battle. Pray God he be not there.

Against my site now I pray God : I pray

Our men be driven back : yet not too soon,

Ferdinand ! Ferdinand ! Heaven grant there's nope

To hear but he ; and he will never hear me

Calling so fearfully, so faintly . . . Alas !

Better to seek him. Since he is not within,

He must be in this garden. He will have sought

Some shelter from the night.—Ah ! the harbour . . .

there . . . [Goes to harbour.]

Why, here. Wake, Ferdinand, wake ! Come, 'tis I,

We may escape. Come. Nay, this cannot be.

Ah, God !—not this. Have pity ; undo it, revoke ;

O let thy hand for once undo.

Thou mightest, O Thou mightest. Ah, how cold.

Oh ! oh ! he is murdered. Blood, his blood. 'Tis true.

Dead, and my dream, my fate, my love ; 'tis done.

The end. Nay, God, as Thou art God, I trust Thee ;

Take me with him. Here in this bower of death

I leave my body,—to this pitiless world

Of hate : and to thy peaceful shores of joy

I arise. O Ferdinand ! he thou didst love.

Thou didst kiss, once . . . and these thy lips so cold

I kiss once more. I have no fear : I come.

[Dies, falling on Ferdinand's body.]

Scuffling at back of stage, the guard runs forward,
followed by the Chorus.

Guard. Some fiend hath pierced my back in the
dark.

Ch. Hey, fellow ;

Silence, or I will slay thee. 'Tis well ; he is dead.—

—Silently, silently.—Stay, stay. Which way ?—

Here o'er the wall.—Hark thou there's fighting there—

Our men have driven them back—we be too late.—

They will return—See where they climb the wall.

[The shouting and firing are grown quite near, and
some figures are seen through the trees scaling the
wall from without.]

Ch. Who be they ? See, they are swarming in the
castle—

Our men, 'tis they. We are saved.—Make not too
sure—

Best hide among the trees.—Hide, hide.—I'll take

The pagan's scimitar. [They retire among trees.]

Enter left through the door a few Moorish soldiers,
followed by the king, whom Enrique pursues.

Soldiers. To the walls ! to the walls !—

Too late—they are here.

En. (to K.). Thy sword. Give up thy sword.

K. Curse thee. I defy thee.

En. Thy sword, or I shall slay thee.

K. Never.

Ho ! villains, rally. 'Tis the prince Enrique.

Kill him, and save me.

En. A rescue ! a rescue !

K. Accursed infidel : but ere thou die . . . Die,
 [The soldiers set on Enrique with the king.
 This hand that slayeth thee, hath slain thy brother.
 En. May God forgive thee if thou speak truth.

The Captives rush out from the trees and overpower the soldiers, the armed of them kill the king as he fights with Enrique.

Ch. A rescue !
 Revenge—revenge.
 K. Ha ! treachery, ho ! I am slain. [Falls dead.
 En. Now who be ye ?
 Ch. Your own men, Prince ; the captives.
 En. Praised be God ! ye have saved my life.

The Christian soldiers who were scaling the wall now come forward.

Ch. soldiers. Victory ! victory !
 The castle is taken.
 En. Some go seize the towers.
 Make speed : there may be men we know not of.
 Take store of ammunition. [Some run off.

Enter more Christian soldiers by door (L.), leading Sala prisoner.

1st Soldier. Here is the general taken.
 En. Sala ben Sala !
 Sa. 'Tis I.
 En. Give me thy sword.
 Sa. I give it thee. [Gives.
 En. Is the day ours ?
 Sa. The night is yours.
 En. I pray,
 What force is in the castle ?
 Sa. There is none.
 Where is the king ?
 En. See thou : But where's my brother ?
 Sa. What ! slain ! the king !
 En. I bade him render his sword :
 But, when he saw I stood alone before him,
 He made a rally of some beaten men
 Who had fled with him ; and so provoked his death
 At the hands of his own prisoners, who ran
 Upon him from the trees and cut him down.
 Sa. By their hands fell he on this spot ?
 En. 'Twas so.
 Sa. O justest stroke of fate. 'Twas here he slew
 The prince thy brother.
 En. Tell me not, I pray,
 That brag of his was true.

Sa. Alas, 'tis true.
 En. My brother is dead ! Ferdinand, Ferdinand !
 Sa. Thy grief is as my shame.
 En. Eternal shame.
 He who spared thee : your royal prisoner,
 Murdered.

Sa. Forbear. I'll lead thee where he lies.
 See thou, he is in the bower.
 En. (approaching bower). Ah ! my brave brother !
 Is thy proud spirit no more ? But what is this ?
 Who is this woman that with eager arms
 Embraceth his pale corpse ?

Sa. (pressing forward). How sayst thou ? Almeh.
 Dead, dead.
 En. Not so, she is warm.

Sa. Almeh. Sweet'st Almeh !
 O nay, she is dead. Ah, loveliest child of earth,
 Is thy young bloom perished ? Alas ! alas !
 Is this thy end ? O miserable king,
 What hast thou done ?

CHORUS.

Alma is dead ! Alma the fair !—
 By love of Ferdinand whelmed in his fate.—
 Lament her, O lament.
 (1.) Joy of our heavy prison ; Ch. Rescued too late—
 Beauty too fair. (1.) Ah ! surely in earth's prison . . .

Ch. A mortal as immortal made—
 O unforeseen her end ! Lament, lament !
 (1.) Our woe is a storm, our hope the fringe of a
 shade,

The smile of a cloud by tempest rent.
 Ch. A dawn in vain arisen.—
 Alma is dead :
 And we, to our superfluous prayer
 Permitted still, our lives have won,—
 Shaking in fear to be untimely undone,—
 By long misdoing undone, unworthy who were ;—
 Saved by her, but saved too late.

Alma the fair,
 Our Alma is dead. 2310

En. What mean these words ?
 Sa. O prince,
 The woes so suddenly befallen us here
 Make a long tale. In brief, these whom thou seest
 Embraced in death, were drawn in life together
 By love's o'ermastering bond. Fate's stroke at me
 Is that I live to tell it.

En. And wast for that,
 Thy king slew Ferdinand ?
 Sa. That was not all :
 For Satan did persuade our thwarted king
 To make a godless bargain of their loves : 2320
 He would have given his daughter to the Prince
 As Ceuta's price. When he refused, 'twas then
 In pride and wrath he slew him.

En. Alas, my brother.
 Inflexible in honour against thyself.
 If but for a day thou hadst seemed to make consent,
 All had been well.

Sa. Not well for him. He lived
 And died with tongue as faithful as his soul.

Ch. He tells not all. Maybe he doth not know.
 En. What's more to tell ?

Ch. O sir, the princess here,
 Who loved thy brother, learned the faith of us. 2330
 Her name is Alma. She is a Christian.

Sa. Yes,
 'Tis true. I knew it. I would have hidden it from thee.
 In this we are shamed most. Prince Ferdinand
 Conquered us here. His love and not his arms
 Wove our disaster.

Chor. Love and faith have conquered.
 Yet did his sword no less avenge his death.
 See, prince, 'tis here, wet with the murderer's blood.
 It saved thee. For this we may rejoice :
 And that we shall return.

En. Ye shall return. But now 'tis not an hour
 For your rejoicing. Still your tongues. And, Sala,
 It lies with thee in place of thy king dead.
 To treat with me. Here is thy sword : and thus

[Giving.

I wipe out debt ; knowing that thou hast been
Generous and faithful to my hapless brother.
Let us make peace. Possess you what was yours
Before this war : I shall lead back my troops,
Nor vex your kingdom further. But I claim
The body of your princess, to inter
In Christian ground. One grave shall hold these lovers.

Sa. I would not separate them,—Heaven be my
witness,—

But shouldst thou bury Almei in some spot
Where to I might not come, there's nothing left
For Sala on this earth but still to fight,
To gain possession of that holy tomb.

En. Fear not, for I will have their sepulchre
In Ceuta, and there to thee it shall be granted
To enter when thou wilt.

Sa. I loved her, prince,
Before thy brother.

En. For myself, I vow

Ne'er to draw sword again. I count all days
That ever I spent in arms lost to my life.
Man's foe is ignorance : and the true soldier
May sit at home, and in retirement win
Kingdoms of knowledge ; or to travel forth
And make discovery of earth's bounds, and learn
What nations of his fellows God hath set
In various countries ; and by what safe roads
They may knit peaceful commerce,—this is well,
And this hath been my choice. To shed man's blood
Brings but such ills on man as here ye see.
To save my brother and these Christian captives
I drew this sword, which thus I sheathe again
For ever.

Ch. Thou wilt lead us home.

En. Peace ! peace !
So much is saved. Now have ye mournful duty
Here to the dead. Bring ye these lovers in.
Let there be no more speech.

THE END.

Yattendon, 1836.

NOTE.—This play, named after the chorus, is on the same subject as Calderon's *El Principe Constante*, from which the little common to both plays is directly taken. Some of the differences are historic; but the most dramatic. Sala ben Sala, whose fine figure is substituted for Muley, is a famous warrior; and the whole story has this claim on English attention, that the Portuguese *Regulus*, Ferdinand, and his brother Henry, "the Navigator" of more solid renown, were grandchildren of John of Gaunt, through his daughter Philippa, who was married to King Joam I. The history is shortly given in the King of Fez' long speech, page 103, line 120 et seq.

Some of the verbal contractions in the printing, where apostrophes supplant vowels, are accidental; but sometimes they are intended for guides to the rhythm in otherwise doubtful places.

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